LIFESTYLE / D1
Lessons on the wonders of Catalan cuisine

BUSINESS / B1
Peso strengthens, hits 6-month high of 50.945 against dollar

METRO / A19
9 injured in demolition in Taguig City

ACROSS / A15
6 persons, including mother and her 3 children, drown in flooding in Cebu City

Battle of 2 Ninoy movies looms

By Jocelyn R. Uy

THE 14 SOLDIERS CONVICTED IN THE Aquino-Galman double murder case may never walk free. But they apparently believe a movie about their lives in prison would clear them from "certain lies and cover-ups."

Navy Billed Prisons Chaplain Msgr. Robert Blaquier yesterday said such a movie would

BATTLE B4

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

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Slick-free resorts cash in on oil spill tourism

By Hazel P. Villa
Inquirer Visayas

MARIA MELINDA, Guimaras—Call it oil spill tourism.

All is not lost for beach resorts in the province whose tourism industry is

GUIM FRONT A4

PRC: No retake of exams

Adjusted grades add 499 to list of passers

By Michael Lim Ubac and Christine O. Avendaño

THE PROFESSIONAL Regulation Commission has come up with a formula that it believes will put to rest the cheating controversy surrounding the June nursing board exams—maintaining that "passers" will not retake the exams, and nullifying 90 of the 100 questions under Test V.

The formula would even increase the number of passers by 499, PRC Chair Leonor Tripoli Rosero yesterday told the House committees on civil service and good government.

Rosero said the formula was a "fair and impartial way" of putting closure to the controversy.

"Oh yes, it's fair to all. So we released the (recomputed) results of the board exam. That's already fair to everyone even to those who failed," Rosero told reporters shortly after the hearing.

In another controversial move, the PRC gave a 2-percent bonus to those who got 75 percent, raising their scores to 75 percent. The

PRC B6

WHAT IS SHE THINKING?
Sisi, a sad-eyed 27-year-old orangutan, looks out of her enclosure at the Manila Zoo on Wednesday. She is all alone in her cage and far, far away from home in the Bornean jungles.
REUTERS

'With 2 to 3 typhoons, this will normalize'

By Blanche S. Rivera, Alexis Papa and Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

"WITH TWO TO THREE TYPHOONS, THIS will normalize," Science Undersecretary Graciano Yumul Jr. yesterday said of the massive oil spill in Western Visayas.

Scientists have expressed confidence that the waves would naturally wash out the bunker fuel oil from the sunken MT Solar 1, which has spoiled beaches, poisoned mangroves and contaminated the rich fishing grounds in the region.

Not 200,000 liters but 1.3 million liters have leaked out of the sunken tanker, according to Yumul.

MT Solar I was carrying 2.1 million liters of bunker fuel oil when it went down on Aug. 11 in Guimaras Strait, according to the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG).

The PCG estimated that the amount of oil that had leaked from the sunken vessel since it sank on Aug. 11 was between 200,000 and 380,000 liters.

Yumul also said that out 220 km but only 99.6 km of coastline were affected by the oil spill.

Citing radar satellite maps and educated estimates by scientists, Yumul gave the new numbers that indicated the oil spill, which

WITH 2 A4

Captain erred, says shipping firm head

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE CAPTAIN OF MT SOLAR I MADE A "wrong decision" when he resumed its voyage to Zamboanga del Sur amid bad weather that caused it to sink, according to the president of tanker owner Sovereign Maritime Development Corp.

Testifying before the Special Board of Marine Inquiry, Sunshine Maritime president Clemente Cancio said it was Captain Norberto Agaro's own decision to set sail for Zamboanga after seeking shelter at the Iloilo anchorage area near Guimaras to escape rough seas and to check on the condition of the tanker.

The sinking of the tanker has led to a massive oil spill in Western Visayas, which was declared a national calamity by President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"In hindsight, I would believe he made the wrong decision," Cancio, referring to Agaro, said in response to a question from the SBMI chair, Rear Admiral Danilo Abinoja.

Abinoja asked Cancio if he thought it would have been prudent for Agaro to wait for the weather to improve before going to Zamboanga. Cancio answered that the company's safety officer had given Agaro the discretion on whether to go or stay put where he had sought shelter.

Cancio said the safety officer had asked Agaro whether everything was all right, and the latter said it was and proceeded with the voyage.

Pressed whether he believed the captain's decision was wrong, Cancio said he thought as much.

Agaro testified the other day that the tanker encountered bad weather off its

CAPTAIN A8

Probers tag soldiers in Albay pastor's murder

By Christian V. Esguerra

FOR A CHRISTIAN FACT-FINDING MISSION, the Melo Commission should find little difficulty identifying those behind the murder of a United Methodist pastor in Daraga, Albay.

Evidence gathered by the 12-member team from the United Methodist Church pointed to soldiers of the Army's 9th Infantry Division as the killers of Pastor Isaias Sta. Rosa, 47, who was riddled with gunfire by 18 masked men on Aug. 3 outside his house in Barangay Malobago.

Sta. Rosa was a member of the leftist Kilusang Magbubukid ng Bicol.

"The action was officially sanctioned by the military and in fact followed the chain of command," lawyer Ephraim Cortez, a member of the investigating team, said in a press conference yesterday.

Cortez said the team investigated the case from Aug. 12 to 14 and was prepared to turn over its evidence to the commission headed by former Supreme Court Justice Jose Melo that was tasked by President Macapagal-Arroyo to look into extrajudicial killings.

PROBERS A9

PATRICK Carl Macario, 8, and Marjorie Salvador, 5, join Wednesday's commemoration of the International Day of the Disappeared at Plaza Miranda in Manila.
KENNY KONG, AFP

Police offer to protect businessmen from NPA

By Luige A. del Puerto

POLICE YESTERDAY OFFERED protection to businessmen who are targets of extortion by the communist New People's Army in exchange for information that could be used to neutralize the rebels.

"We are open (to them) reporting to us, if they are victims of extortions by the NPA, and we will guarantee their protection," Philippine National Police Director General Oscar Calderon said.

The identity of the businessmen will be guarded, said Calderon a day after Malacañan Sec. Era Posadas denounced the NPA for allegedly engaging in "downright gangsterism" after a rebel group torched a truck belonging to a Bacolod City company that refused to pay millions in "revolutionary taxes."

Police have mapped out areas—notably in southern and central Luzon, Bicol and Cagayan Valley—where the alleged extortion activities of the NPA, the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines, are reportedly rampant.

Calderon called these areas the milking grounds that provide the NPA a "financial support system."

The Armed Forces has estimated that the rebels are collecting at least P10 million monthly in Mindanao, P20 million in Central Luzon, and about the same amount in southern Luzon.

Another source of communist funding is the fees paid by politicians in order to campaign in guerrilla-influenced areas during elections.

Bataan/ Albayan is one of sev-

POLICE A9

India taxman shows way in fight against corruption

By Fe Zamora

A WORLD FREE OF BRIBE IS IMpossible, but people can always dream of one where they can fight corruption and injustice.

Arvind Kejriwal, a tax collector in New Delhi and one of this year's Ramon Magsaysay awardees, yesterday showed how his countrymen empowered themselves by demanding transparency in all government transactions.

Kejriwal, 38, said ordinary citizens had been able to demand full accounting of government projects by invoking the Right to Information Act which the Indian government enacted in 2001.

"Right to information is about truth coming out in public domain. It is about transparency. It is about ethical governance," he said in a lecture at the Ramon Magsaysay Center titled "The Anatomy of Corruption: Exercising the People's Right to Information."

In recognition of his efforts that activated India's right to information movement on the grass-roots level, empowering the capital's poorest citizens to fight corruption by holding the government accountable, the Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation will confer on Kejriwal today the 2006 Ramon Magsaysay Award for Emergent Leadership. (See story on Page A3.)

MAGSAYSAY AWARDS

The six other awardees of Asia's version of the Nobel Prize are the Philippines' Eugenia Duran-Apostol, founding chair of the Philippine Daily Inquirer, for journalism, and businessman Antonio Meloto and the charity he built called the Gawad Kalinga Community Development Foundation; Cambodia's Bi Sonn

INDIA A9

KEJRIWAL: Power of information

WEATHER FORECAST

Second FRONTPAGE

Defense in Erap trial rests

Comelec takes up initiative petition today

By Jerome Aning

THE COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS WILL MEET IN executive session today to decide on the petition for a people's initiative to amend the Constitution filed by the Sigaw ng Bayan and Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines.

According to Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos Jr., there was already a consensus among six commissioners to vote for the dismissal on the petition seeking to change the form of government to a parliamentary-unicameral system.

"This is an easy battle. (This issue) has been in the air for the past few months. It's impossible for the commissioners not to have a consensus. It's just a matter of reducing our consensus to a written resolution," he said.

On allegations of irregularities in the collection and verification of signatures for the initiative, Abalos said the Comelec would determine this issue once it decides that it has jurisdiction over the initiative petition.

Barred by SC

In 1997, the Supreme Court barred the Comelec from entertaining any petition for initiative on amendments to the Constitution because of the absence of an enabling law.

The high tribunal said the law on referendum and initiative, RA 6735, was inadequate to effect amendments to the Constitution.

Sigaw ng Bayan and Ulap has asked the Comelec to verify the 6.3 million signatures it collected supposedly in a petition for a people's initiative to change the Constitution.

Meanwhile, the Consortia for the Defense of Liberties (Codal) yesterday became the ninth group to file an opposition to the initiative petition.

Codal convenors Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile and Msgr. Clarence Gallardo (Bataan) cited the same issues raised by other petitioners—that the initiative petition cannot be entertained by the Comelec because of the Supreme Court prohibition and that it is invalid because it is a blanket revision of, and not mere amendments to, the Charter.

The group also agreed with lawyer Jose Sugaing Jr. of the Movement of Attorneys for Brotherhood, Integrity and Nationalism Inc. that the petition was "passed on the presumption or expectancy that the Supreme Court may change its mind."

"Nobody has the right to appeal [to the Court], much less challenge its determination in a manner that borders on direct challenge to its authority to pronounce what the law is," Codal said.

The group also accused Abalos disqualified from the en banc deliberations on the petition because he allegedly "publicly pre-judged the issue and supported the legitimacy and constitutionality of the verification of the signatures."

One voice

Lawyer Pete Pardo Santiago of the OneVoice citizens' group yesterday moved to a position in the initiative petition that would allow an interim parliament to convene and propose even more amendments to the Constitution.

If the amendments to the original petition were to be approved through a referendum, there will be a transitory period during which the current Senate and House of Representatives, together with Cabinet and the Vice President, would be merged in form an interim Parliament, Santiago said.

Thereafter, the country's lawmaker leaders yesterday complained that they were being left out of the Charter change process.

Batasan Pambansa head member James Marty Lim, president of the Ugat ng mga Barangay said Speaker Jose de Venecia should be consulted by the Ulap on the final draft of the petition.

"Honestly, I myself have yet to see a copy of the petition," said Lim who was interviewed on the sidelines of a parliamentary conference by the Inquirer's national convention this year. With a report from Norman Bordadora

GMA backs both initiative, Con-Ass

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-Ar[illegible] supports the people's initiative for constitutional amendments being presented by the Sigaw ng Bayan and the Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines just as she supports a House of Representatives move to convene Congress into a constituent assembly to revise the Constitution.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said the President supported both modes because she wanted Charter change to happen.

Ermita made these statements as he sought to assure Mike Arroyo, the leader of the influential 11 Buddha diabetic group, that the people's initiative to amend the Charter was constitutional.

Ribarik, who is opposed to the people's initiative, wants Ermita to declare her position on the people's initiative, [illegible] pointing to his millions of supporters to block efforts to change the Constitution through that mode.

"The policy of the President is to have political reforms through Charter change and therefore she encourages [illegible] pursue the people's initiative," Ermita said in his weekly Palace briefing.

"I'm sure [Arbalos] understands it is one of the modes provided for in the Constitution," he said.

Ermita said Abalos may have said what he did "to make the national leadership aware of the need of such a big religious group."

"But still we have to go by the provisions of the Constitution, we cannot take a stand against what Ulap and Sigaw ng Bayan have done because that is constitutional," Ermita said.

He said the President also welcomed House moves to gather 195 signatures to convene a constituent assembly.

The executive secretary said he was not aware of any meeting yesterday between the President and Arbalos on the matter.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said Malacañang would only appeal for "enlightened and sober debate" on Charter change, insisting that it's not the people who were clamoring for it.

"But whichever of the two modes already on record comes first, whether a people's initiative or a constituent assembly, is something that the courts and eventually the people will decide," he said.

Christine O. Avendaño

Philippine Association for the Study of Overweight & Obesity
3rd POSTGRADUATE COURSE
SEPTEMBER 1 & 2, 2006
12th ANNUAL CONVENTION
Century Park Hotel Grand Ballroom
"WINNING THE WAR AGAINST OBESITY"

Philippine Association for the Study of Overweight & Obesity
Officers and Board of Directors 2006

FR SONNY CHAN

KIM NYON SOOM

EUGENIA APOSTOL

SANDUK BUT

ARVIND KEJRIWAL

ANTONIO MELOTO

Asian achievers honored with RM awards today

By Margaux C. Ortiz

SIX OUTSTANDING ASIAN achievers including the founding chair of the Philippine Daily Inquirer, will receive the prestigious Ramon Magsaysay Award...next, ed as chief victims of the Pol Pot regime...to entrepreneur of the Ond... Israel Center of the Philippines today.

The recipients of "Asia's highest honor" were announced to the press by the Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation (RMAF) on Tuesday. They are Cambodian government official Ek Sonn Chan; Korean public servant Kim Nyon Soom; Filipino journalist and publisher Eugenia Apostol; Nepalese doctor Sanduk Ruit; Indian leader Arvind Kejriwal; and Filipino community builder Antonio Meloto.

The Central Kalinga Community Development Foundation, which Meloto heads, also received a Magsaysay Award for "fearlessly the faith and generosity of Filipinos the world over to confront poverty in the Philippines and provide every family the dignity of a decent home and neighborhood."

"The awardees are not usually people in the public eye. They are modest and they operate very quietly," said Emily Abrera, the chair of the RMAF board of trustees.

Secret search

Explaining the process by which the awardees are chosen every year, Abrera said the research into the background of the nominees was carried out "under extreme circumstances."

Until the foundation informs them that they had been chosen, the awardees are not even aware that they had been nominated, she explained.

Aparicio, who was recognized for "her tremendous example in placing the truth-telling press at the center of the struggle for democratic rights and better governance in the Philippines," said in a short speech that she had nothing new to say to her friends in the media.

"But I learned a new phrase that I hope you will like," she said.

She said that at a meeting with the awardees, Gov. Ramon Magsaysay Jr., the son of the late President Ramon Magsaysay, after whom the awards are named, had called the media a "disturbing presence."

"Don't you think that's a beautiful phrase? The press should always be a disturbing presence in their own countries," Aparicio said.

Aparicio, who won the award for journalism, literature and creative communication, has been cited many times for her editorial publishing achievements, particularly for her role in the mid-'80s reformist with her 4th & 5th Special Editions, the forerunners of the Inquirer. The Pinoy Times tabloid newspaper that she set up in 1999 banned her from access to official State functions funds for corruption and incompetence.

Filipino pride

Meloto, the second Filipino recipient, was recognized for "inspiring Filipinos to believe with pride that there can be a nation without shame."

"This award is an affirmation that we can make a difference in our country if we rise above our own differences," said Meloto who received the community leadership award.

Drawing on the support of the Church-based Couples for Christ, Meloto transformed a pure barangay into a viable neighborhood with security and attractive houses. It became the first Gawad Kalinga village.

Today there are more than 500 Gawad Kalinga villages in the Philippines. The organization, which also received the community leadership award, aims to build 7,000 new communities by 2010.

Ek, who heads the Phnom Penh Water Supply Authority, was given the government service award for his exemplary rehabilitation of the Cambodian capital's broken-down water system and for delivering safe drinking water to 1.2 million people.

The award for peace and international understanding went to Ruit, an eye doctor who "introduced new techniques to cataract surgery to Nepal and other Asian countries, "enabling the cost-lessly blind to enjoy the poorest countries once again."

The Foundation cited Kejriwal for emergent leadership for activating India's right-to-information movement at the grassroots, through the organization he founded, Parivaran, which means "change."

Fighting corruption

Kejriwal's initiatives empowered New Delhi's poorest citizens to fight corruption by holding the nation government answerable to the people.

Ruit was recognized for healing. The Himalayan Foundation, aimed at rebuilding the Eastern habit of generosity and popular participation.

Ruit, who received the award for public service, challenged traditional beliefs and practices and medicine, and the ugly blistering of pus, and and Charter change advocates," Magsaysay said in a prepared speech.

He said the rest of all these problems was grab and corruption and that those behind the cases requested absence on daily basis by media were "people in power and authority." With reports from Juliet Labog-Javellana

Military, Abu Sayyaf swap casualty claims in Jolo clashes

A LEADER OF THE AL-QAIDA-linked Abu Sayyaf group and [illegible] at least five members have been killed in a month-long US-backed military offensive in the southern Philippines, but claimed the rebels dealt heavy casualties on government troops.

The military said Abu Sulaiman's claim was untrue, saying only three marine and army troops have died and 31 others wounded during the offensives that started Aug. 1 on Jolo island. More than 10 Abu Sayyaf rebels have been killed and troops captured at least one rebel stronghold of Allah and the day of judgment," Sulaiman said in a statement sent to news agencies.

He said Abu Sayyaf rebels simultaneously enforced a counterplan after government troops launched their assaults, with clashes spreading near the mountainous terrorist hideouts in Patikul and Sulu. He claimed the guerrillas killed [illegible] soldiers.

Marine Brig. Gen. Juancho Sabban said troops were continuing the assaults, stressing reservations were providing help but were not engaged to combat as Sulaiman claimed.

Evidence that troops gathered in the bush-trekking area [illegible] still suspicious that the militants continue to plot attacks in [illegible] and elsewhere in the country, Sabban said.

Abu Sayyaf chieftain Khadaffy Janjalani and two Indonesian militants belonging to the Jemaah-based Jemaah Islamiyah group, Umar Patek and Dulmatin, remain on Jolo and are targets of the offensives, Sabban said.

Washington has offered as much as $5 million for the capture of Janjalani, Sulaiman and other Abu Sayyaf commanders. It has also offered huge rewards for Patek and Dulmatin, who spent by one name. The Indonesians are suspected masterminds of the 2002 nightclub bombings in Bali, Indonesia, that killed 202 people and are believed to have fled to the southern Philippines shortly after the attacks.

American troops, meanwhile, inaugurated two all-purpose community centers on Jolo as part of a months-long humanitarian mission. The US-funded centers could be used to provide a range of services, including medical treatment, to improve their villages, US officials said.

"This development will bring jobs, better educational opportunities, better medical care for these communities, something the Abu Sayyaf group and the Jemaah Islamiyah cannot offer," US Army commander Col. James Linder said.

The Abu Sayyaf, which the government dismisses as a group of bandits, used to have more than 1,000 men at the height of a kidnapping spree in the southern Philippines in strength has been whittled down to about 400 men, who are mostly on the run from offensives, the military says. AP

She gave birth just 9 months ago... Look at Dawn Now!

After the joys of childbirth, the battle to bring back that athletic hot figure after 9 months of the build-up and seemingly perennial changes is very challenging. As one Dawn Zulueta-Laqui[illegible] regards shares how she was able to transform her body from [illegible] to [illegible]

Although she swears that every pound she gained was worth it to her son Jacobo, Dawn, understandably recalls the depression and insecurity she felt upon seeing her inflated body right after childbirth. She says, "Coming from a pregnancy, it was very frustrating since I couldn't do much about my excess weight. Given my post-caesarian condition, I was temporarily barred from doing any strong activity that, for a moment, I already contemplated on getting liposuction as a desperate measure."

After considering all the horrors of liposuction, Dawn dropped the idea of any surgical procedure. She candidly states, "I don't want to look like a [illegible] after going under the knife!" Closing pointer to her caesarian scar emphatic, "I don't want the unwanted scars that liposuction often produces. I know people who have regretted their decisions after the ripples like contour start to form and become visible on their bodies. It's really ugly. Add to it the fact that it's not just expensive, but most importantly, it can be quite dangerous."

It was at that point that she chanced upon Marie France's slimming system. "Upon finding out that all their treatments are non-invasive, I immediately gave it a try. The next thing I knew, I was diametrically losing all the unwanted pounds and inches of fat," Dawn exclaims. "And then finally, after shedding all that fat, I found out about Marie France's current treatment, Ultrabeps. It was the perfect finishing touch for people who hates but might but still have some lumps and bumps that just won't seem to go away. It really re-sculpts your body and shows off your curves. I was lucky that I was one of the first to try this amazing technology. After my first treatment, I immediately said to myself 'wow, it's genius!' Ultrabeps definitely has all the benefits of lipo minus the surgery and all the risks! There's no downtime whatsoever."

According to Dawn, the treatment takes an hour and a half and is done once a month. Four to five treatments are normally recommended. Blaming her fat stomach, she proudly says, "The effect is already visible as early as the first treatment, well you believe! I was pleasantly surprised to see my tummy flatter. It boosted my confidence that I started treatment on my thighs soon after. So you see, liposuction is unnecessary."

Asked if she experienced any discomfort during the treatment, Dawn reveals, "No, not at all. The treatment was very relaxing. It was painless. The doctor explained that Ultrabeps destroys the fat cells in the targeted areas like my stomach and thighs. From there, the fat is metabolized and burned naturally by my body as energy. Before I knew it, my body's once again capable of wearing even the skimpiest of outfits like a bikini. I'm confident because I have nothing more to hide. I've got the body of a new 20-something woman even if I'm already 37 and have just given birth!"

Not the least bothered as to the seriousness people might cook up about her latest and newest prize ad to date, Dawn coolly shrugs her shoulders and says, "We're getting out of the stereotype. Even if you're a mommy, it shouldn't stop you off the pleasure to look and feel good about yourself," She adds, "Like in any case, having a sexier and leaner body most makes me more excited to do a lot of productive things because the confidence is there. If my family and I were to go to the beach, I can go out and frolic, in any two-piece swimsuit without regret. When I'm free from executive, I make my husband more proud of me because we are both able to enjoy our quality moments with enthusiasm." Dawn corroborates, "It doesn't matter if you're on your thirties or fifties because as women, we owe it to ourselves to always look good. Every woman can achieve the way body she wants if she only sets her mind to it. There's so many choices out there and Marie France offers a lot. It caters to women with safe and effective solutions for whatever problem there body has."

Prior to ending the conversation, Dawn defers to a joking mood as she highlights, "For beware of the consequences of Ultrabeps. You'll definitely start looking more delicious to your husband and you just might find yourself pregnant again!"

Call Marie France at 894-BODY (26399) for a free consultation.

Show your faces, Gonzalez tells UP naked runners

By Armand H. Nocum

DARE OFF YOUR BRAINS AND run naked.

This was the dare of Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez to University of the Philippines fraternity members who they can rankle to show their opposition to fighting for academic anti-theft rights.

"That's nothing. I would have a high regard for them if they will remove their masks," Gonzalez said Tuesday after the Alpha Phi Omega fraternity in the Ateneo de Manila University lost nearly all of its members after the fraternity's 16 original schedule.

The run was in reaction to Gonzalez' statement that the previous state college has been a breeding ground of destabilizers and people running around naked.

"They should remove their masks to show that they are not ashamed of themselves ... or what they are doing. Why are they covering their faces?" Gonzalez said in a telephone interview with the Inquirer.

In their run Monday, APO members carried placards saying: "No serve the people who pay for our education."

Last Saturday, Gonzalez lamented that apart from producing individuals useful to society, UP has been churning out students who are out to bring down the government.

"They school always breeds the destabilizers that haunt the country year after year. They are saying as if they are the only ones who know how to run the country" Gonzalez told the Inquirer Saturday.

But he distilled that he was not hitting the entire UP student population because "there are many students there who are bright and good."

Gonzalez pointed to the Diliman Board the APO fraternity as members of the land of students that comprise the school.

"I dare my head off to those because they imitate the running of salad people ... that's also one kind of culture that they develop there," he said as he raised hopes that in the future, more women will join the run held in December.

"Maybe are are going to do that direction ... there are now women running naked. I will not be surprised if they will go to school with only their books, reading more," he said.

Gonzalez lamented that UP has been the site of numerous protest rallies and symposiums calling for the resignation of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"In every storm that takes place, UP students are in the frontlines," he said. "As a matter of fact, records in our history will show that since the martial law years, students from UP were the ones who went underground and fought the government. In fact many of them went to China and never came back."

Correction

IN THE AUG. 24 ISSUE, Central Bank (CB) column on Page B2 of the Business section—"The parting is over"—misstated that former Rep. Salvador Escudero III, who helped establish the Foundation for the Upgrading of Education (FUSE) 12 years ago, was not acting high in the latest survey for "senatorshiables." The columnist was actually referring to Salvador Escudero III's son, House Minority Leader Francis Escudero.

* * *

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors or writing to the Fact Desk, Philippine Daily Inquirer (PDI Building, Chino Roces Ave., corner Makati Ave., Makati City, fax No. 897-47-10-98, e-mail address: factdesk@inquirer.com.ph.

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THE DAILY GOSPEL

Thursday, August 31, 2006
21st Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: 1 Cor 1:1-9
Gospel: Matthew 24:42-51

Jesus said to his disciples: "Stay awake, then, for you do not know on what day your Lord will come. Just think about this: if the owner of the house knew then the time would come by night around a certain hour, he would stay awake to prevent his house to be broken into. So let you, for the time of Man will come at the hour you least expect it.

"Imagine to together servant whom his master has put in charge of his household to give them food at the proper time. Fortunate indeed is that servant whom his master will find at work when he comes. Truly, I say to you, he will set servant that one with everything he has.

"But as with the bad servant who thinks: My master is delayed, and he begins to maltreat his fellow servants, eating and drinking with drunkards. But his master will come on the day he does not know and at the hour he is not suspects. He will dismiss this servant and deal with him as with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Commentary:

Paul reminds that the witness he bore to the Corinthians has been rewarded richly in their speech, knowledge and confirmation of belief. He prays for continued growth and strength and thanksgiving, many graces and peace among them so that they will be holy. Could this be a description of us?

Jesus is warning his core to "stay awake" because we can't know what the day of the Son of Man will come, when judgment will come upon the earth. We are to be like servants of the master who is away, who are faithful, not like those who take over, take the master's house for their own, because one another can't get caught. He will be judged and punished if we act like those he has been criticizing and calling to task. If the Son of Man came today what would we be doing?

Palparan replacement to try new tack vs Reds

By Dona Pazzibugan

A LOWKEY ARMY GENERAL credited with Bohol's turnaround from a hotbed of communism to a tourist destination will replace Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan Jr. as commander of the 7th Infantry Division in Central Luzon, where militants accuse Palparan of allegedly leaving a trail of extrajudicial killings and human rights abuses.

In recent weeks, thousands of panicked residents in Nueva Ecija and Bulacan scrambled to get a community tax certificate, or cedula, after soldiers under Palparan's command accused them of being rebels or their sympathizers.

Some, who had barely survived his war as the National Capital Region Command commander, were handpicked by top Defense officials to replace Palparan because of his success in Bohol as commander of the 302nd Infantry Brigade.

"This is a fresh approach," said Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz Jr.

Without referring to Palparan, Cruz said Gonzes's proven approach in winning the support of the Boholanos should be a model for the military's counterinsurgency campaign.

Total approach

"General Gonzes and our soldiers in Bohol became like tourism promoters. That is the image that we want to show the public. Everybody's success story should be the approach. That is the total government approach," Cruz said.

He said that during the years that Gonzes was military commander there, Bohol's tourist trade boomed from a mere 150,000 visitors a year to one million tourists annually largely because the insurgency problem there was put under control.

In an interview yesterday, Gonzes said he would continue Palparan's cedula campaign but perhaps not as aggressively.

"I'm a broad-minded person and to hurt I'm trying to reach out to people in such a way that they will understand us, that we can understand each other so we can avoid fighting. We have to expand the peace process," he said.

"Although we prepare for battle, we also watch them will be no need for fighting," he added.

Cruz acknowledged suggestions that Palparan's heavy-hand approach may have alienated people from the military and the government.

Success story

"The good thing is, we'll put Johnny Gonzes in the 7th Infantry Division. He has a success story in Bohol," Cruz said.

In 2002, Gonzes replaced Palparan as commander of the 204th Infantry Brigade based in Nueva Ecija and Bulacan where Palparan is now reported to be stationed as a "hunter" and "encounter."

Palparan was promoted to division commander of the 6th Infantry in Iloilo while Gonzes served as acting commander of the 204th Infantry Brigade from November 2002 to October 2003.

Gonzes, who was a colonel at the time, assumed command of the 302nd Infantry Brigade based in Tagbilaran, Bohol in October 2003.

In just two years, Gonzes was able to convince New People's Army rebels to the area to rejoin mainstream society.

He reportedly did this through radio programs, distribution of reading materials and even face-to-face dialogues.

Gonzes eventually led the groundbreaking ceremonies for a housing and livelihood center for rebel returnees right inside a military reservation.

Governor's praise

In 2005, Bohol Gov. Erico Aumentado praised Gonzes for his successful counterinsurgency campaign which he said led to the dissolution of vast—if not 100% frozen and the transfer of the headquarters of the Central Visayas regional party committee to Cebu province.

Gonzes earned his star-rank while still serving in Bohol. He sustained control of the NCR Command last June 30.

The Army has claimed that Palparan's campaign has been successful and would even be replicated in other Central Luzon provinces.

But Cruz did not seem enthusiastic about Palparan's approach, saying he would ask for the latter's assessment "based on the facts."

"What is important here is that Johnny Gonzes was very successful in Bohol. I believe that if he can replicate what he did in Bohol, his approach will also be successful in Central Luzon," Cruz said.

Gonzes said that asking for a cedula was classified operating procedure where the military assists barangays.

"But we still see the houses to house checks," he said.

Barangay league head presses use of vote counters

By Norman Bordadora

THE COUNTRY'S LEAGUE OF COMMUNITY leaders yesterday said it was looking into the possibility of filing another petition before the Supreme Court to ask the tribunal to reconsider its decision barring the use of 1,991 automated counting machines in the coming elections.

James Marty Lim, #votelocsupt board member and president of the Liga ng mga Barangay, said that their league is studying coming up with another petition containing new arguments different from the ones presented by lawyer Romulo Macalintal in his own petition asking the high court to allow the use of the AES in next year's elections.

"Every day that it takes the manual counting is a day that the lives of our community leaders are in peril," Lim said in a news conference yesterday.

Lim said the faster the results of the elections are transmitted from the miscreants to the next levels of canvassing, the better and safer for those involved in the counting of votes.

"Having been national president of the Liga for nine years, I've seen how our fellow public servants toil and suspect themselves during elections to correct has denied that a big chunk of elected local officials is linked again has incurred Welsh," Lim said.

"The longer it takes for the results to be generated, the greater is their exposure to danger," he added.

Lim said that aside from the poll automation limiting the danger on those involved in the counting of votes, the Liga will also argue that the AES's already belong to the Filipino people "having been delivered and, aware, paid for."

"We only see the loss on obligations and economics disregarded loss also the trust of our people who rely on government's prudence in public spending," Lim said.

Lafayette given until Sept. 8 to test run

SORSOGON — The Lafayette Philippines Inc. has only until Sept. 8 to complete the final stage of the test run in Bulan-Bulan, Albay allowed by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the head of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB).

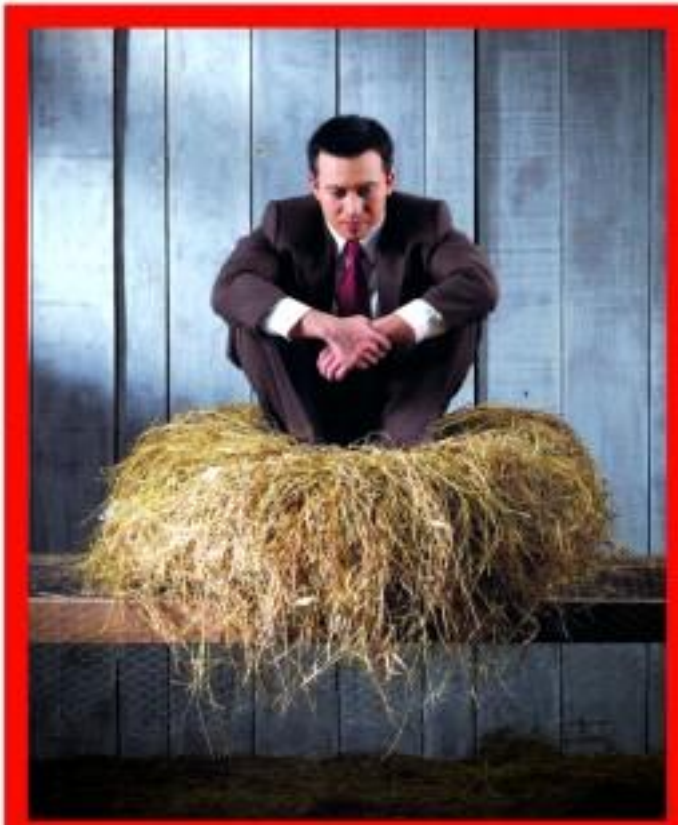
The 15-day trial and final stage started on Aug. 24 after the Mines Adjudication Board gave the go-ahead, said MGB Bicol director Reynaldo Jasa, after protests by various concerned groups and the local church here and in Albay.

Jasa said this is the most critical part of the three-stage test run as it would be on actual operation of the entire system of the production to test the safety measures installed by the company.

The 600-ha head and mineral ore would be used together with the oxygen chemicals like sodium cyanide, calcium oxide, copper sulfate and others to produce dore gold and silver.

A number of MGB personnel have been assigned to monitor the test run and observe whether the safety measures work. Rob- by G. Labalan, Inquirer Southern Luzon

Storm floods strand thousands of Metro commuters yesterday



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Ex-nursing association head meets whistle-blower

By TJ Burgonio

HONOR CODERO, THE EX-signed president of the Philippine Nurses Association, yesterday showed up at the Senate hearing on the leakage at the June nursing board exams and came face-to-face with a whistle-blower.

Cordero read a statement refuting allegations against him.

During a PowerPoint presentation, slides of sample questions and answers supposedly shown during the final coaching by the Cordero-owned Review Center on 100 Months on June 8 and 9 were presented during the hearing.

Cordero, who also owns Philippine College of Health and Sciences, repeatedly maintained that those were not shown during the two-day final coaching.

"We have a different material presented during our enhancement program," he said, asserting that claims by a witness that the sample questions and answers were presented during the final coaching were "incompetent."

At the hearing, Cordero's friend Daniel Bautista who had testified first, he was among more than 300 reviewees who were coached on test questions during lecture two-day final coaching, some of which cropped up in the June 13-15 board exams.

The two had a brief exchange at the hearing, with Bautista refuting Cordero's claim that there was only one instructor during the final coaching. "There were three alternating lecturers," Bautista bravely told the committee.

Bautista also claimed that he and Cordero knew each other.

After attending the House inquiry in the evening, Professional Regulation Commission officials skipped the Senate hearing for the third time.

Calling their third no-show "unfortunate," Sen. Richard Gordon lambasted PRC Chair Leonor Tripon-Rosero and Commissioners Renato Valdecantos and Avelino de la Rea, and recommended that they be cited for contempt.

"I really feel these people need and require to be held in contempt, especially the person who needs to be reinstated from the PRC like cited truth because Mr. President this person obviously flouts the law," he added, referring to Rosero, President Macapagal-Arroyo's deputy.

After meeting in executive session for nearly the PRC officials, we emphasize only they should not be cited for contempt, with the option to cite them in contempt and order them arrested if they fail to satisfactorily show non-appearance.

PRC: No retake of exams; adjusted grades add 499 to list of passers

Passages A-1

IMPORTANT

To the Devotees of the SACRED HEART OF JESUS. Tomorrow, September 1, 2006 is the FIRST FRIDAY of the month. Novenas and Masses to the SACRED HEART OF JESUS and to ST. ANTHONY are given away FREE in the Chapels, Hospitals, Schools, etc. Please get them from LAIKENO at the Santuario de San Antonio de Padua, Makati City or from Betty Lee of 190 Yakushi St. Legaspi Village, Makati City.

CORDERO

homes is aimed at providing those who might be lost by the downgrading of Test V (psychiatric nursing) with a "cushion."

To pass the nursing board exams, examinees should correctly answer at least 75 percent of 500 test questions equally distributed among five subject matters.

Test V was one of the two exams where questions were leaked to two review centers in their students' days before the nursing board exams were administered on June 11-12. The other was Test III, medical-surgical nursing.

The leakage led the Court of Appeals to order the PRC to put on hold the confirming of those who passed the tainted exams. Hundreds were able to take their oath before the CA issued the restraining order to the PRC. But a group of nurses and students wrote the court to nullify the oath-taking.

Because of the controversy, a number of hospitals are reluctant to hire the June passers.

Violations

The new PRC formula did not nullify those calling for a retake of the nursing board exams to restore public confidence in next nursing graduates.

Dante Ang, who heads an inter-agency task force looking into the leakage, said the recomputation violated Republic Act No. 9173, or the Nursing Act of 2002.

He said even Test III was compromised.

"The law says that your passing average should be 75 percent, provided you don't get a grade below 60 percent in any subject. Where the Board of Nursing recomputed Test III corresponding to the questions were one question is 1.20 percent, the effect of that would be to get the 60 percent minimum passing average for Test III," Ang said at the hearing.

Thus, examinees only have to answer 49 correct questions.

Ang pointed out, in recomputing Test III, and by assigning 1.25 percent to every question left, in effect, you're passing average was reduced from 60 to 48 questions. This is not acceptable if you follow the original intention and the spirit of the law ... and there's not passing to doubt the competence of the examinees," he said.

How's how the PRC formula works

The PRC nullifies 98 of the 100 questions under Test V and incorporates the scores of examinees in the remaining 10 questions into the final score, which is computed by combining the average of Tests I, III and Tests IV.

The result: The number of passers went up from 37,022 to 37,521, or from 41.26 to 43.41 percent passing rate. A total of 42,886 nursing graduates took the exams on June 11 to 12 in 11 test centers across the country.

Bar exams precedent

PRC Commissioner Avelino de la Rea explained to the joint committee that reducing the overall passing rate from 75 percent to 70 percent is allowed under the law.

Calling their third no-show "unfortunate," Sen. Richard Gordon lambasted PRC Chair Leonor Tripon-Rosero and Commissioners Renato Valdecantos and Avelino de la Rea, and recommended that they be cited for contempt.

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the weight of Test V "unfairly escalated to 75 percent of passing being graded."

De la Rea said the PRC moves was not without precedent.

In 2002, she said the Supreme Court increased one subject, commercial law, in the bar exams because of a leakage, and facilitated the weight to the other seven subjects.

"So out of the eight subjects was removed. What we did is cure an unusual response from testing institution that caused final all the second beneficiaries of the leakage. We can find some of the beneficiaries but not all," De la Rea said.

Some of the examinees might have been "hurt" because Test V was downgraded, but it "would only be true for those who have only high grades in Test V," she said.

De la Rea said those who passed Tests I-IV, even with a low grade, would not really be disadvantaged.

Advantage of leakage removed

She said the PRC did the recomputation "blindly" because the names in the examination papers had not been deliberated until after the results had been processed and graded.

"We don't know who they are. But we know that people like the reviewers like morning (George Gordon's, owner of a review center), (since) the advantage of the leakage was removed, did not pass, " she said.

Sen. Juan Flavier, the civil service committee, Rep. Francis Hermosisima, said the joint committee could not yet comment on the PRC decision because it was still on its preliminary hearing.

Hermosisima said the Court of Appeals could overturn both the controversy. "We must remember that the decision is not as possible for there's a pending injunction from the court," he said.

Maintaining breast the results of the nursing board exams but only for those passers found to have benefited from the leakage.

Sen. Edgardo Angara and Sen. Edgardo Lacson said it was the position of President Macapagal-Arroyo that those who passed should not retake the exams, except those who took advantage of the leakage.

NBI probe

Rosero said the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) was set to submit to him today the results of its investigation, which included those to be criminally charged and the identification of the testing phase where the leakage happened.

Antazo who will make the final decision to give the order of the exams, the executive secretary said the Palace "will give it to the PRC."

Responding to the challenge of Cavite Rep. Jesus Crispin Remulla for the PRC board to resign en masse, Rosero said: "We're all with each other investigation. Remulla: Until found guilty and unqualified, we won't resign."

Remulla said resignation was the best option to give way to an "impartial and fair investigation" by the NBI and Congress whose body members are separately conducting a probe.

"No one is invincible. This will leave them forever," he said.

Whistle-blowers

In Baguio City, the examinees, who exposed the cheating, said many of them were on the brink of giving up the fight after the PRC rejected the proposal for the examinees to retake the exams.

On Aug. 24, the whistle-blowers and the nursing school deans sympathetic to their cause issued a manifesto saying they were supporting a recommendation.

"Palabis: is it over or, retaking the spoiled portions in Judge management, Tests II and IV is the less unjust course to adopt. This gives the examinees the opportunity to shake off the stigma caused by the leakage, assures them that employers will not hire them knowing because of the conviction that they are incompetent, and restores the integrity of the nursing profession," the manifesto read.

Frustrated

But Lilian Bingot, one of the complainants, said they were frustrated about the way things were going.

Bingot said the complainant who first obtained a copy of the 18-page test leakage that was circulated by dozens of a review center during the examination in Baguio.

She said the group decided to stay away from the retake debate because they all felt that taking another examination would be unnecessary.

"Marinig mag-retake ito. Kung ako ay ma-retake ulit, we would have to take a new examination. And they told us we could retake the test earlier, we would have taken the bullet," she said.

"But if they ask us to do a retaking, we would have to go back to memorize a new manual to see our prepare all over again. Now that PRC is again saying no to a retake, we will just go with the flow unless the government shows that it means to convict the people who leaked the test."

The complainants had asked the PRC to hold their test results and to suspend members of the Board of Nursing. The PRC did not heed their request.

"We want to move on, but by releasing the test results, the PRC managed to shift the debate from the culprits who should be convicted to a debate between people who passed and failed," said Bingot.

"This is unfair because we are all victims," she added. With reports from Vincent Cabreza, Augusto Nawal and Lauren

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Palace to follow only RP court order on Piatco

Palace to help Joc-Joc

By GIC Cabacungan Jr.

MALACAÑANG SEES nothing wrong in extending humanitarian assistance to former Agriculture Undersecretary Jocelyn "Joc-Joc" Bolante who has been in detention in the US for suspected visa violations.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said it was only "customary" for Foreign Affairs Secretary Alberto Romulo to intervene the Philippine consular general to extend assistance to Bolante, the latter being a citizen of the Philippines.

Bolante's lawyers and family members had informed the Philippine embassy in Washington that he was suffering from cardiovascular condition that may require urgent and specialized medical attention that might not be available in his detention facility at the Waseca County Detention Center in Wisconsin.

Ermita, however, said he had no personal knowledge of Bolante's illness.

The OIG confirmed yesterday that Bolante sought assistance on humanitarian grounds.

"We are mandated by law to help any FIL [plus who seeks the Philippine] government's help," OIG spokesman Gilberto Sicoppe told a dzBB interview.

Ermita also announced that Malacañang would go by what the local courts say.

Because of Piatco's bedfellow status, Ermita said the government was more convenient than ever that it should run Ninoy 3 on its own and reject Piatco's offer last year to jointly manage the terminal.

Press Secretary Ignacio R. Bunye said in a statement the "latest action of the Filipino people and the sovereign prerogative of the Philippine government under the law" would prevail.

"Everyone knows that this is within the jurisdiction of the Philippine courts," he said.

In late August, the Singapore-based International Chamber of Commerce Arbitration Tribunal ordered the government to return the Ninoy 3 to Piatco for failing to pay the concession.

Palace sought arbitration from the ICC after the Supreme Court in 2002 upheld the government's decision to void Piatco's Ninoy 3 contract for being onerous and disadvantageous.

In December 2004, the government filed a case for expropriation with the Pasay court so it could take over the terminal. A month later, the court ordered the government to pay Piatco P5.3 billion as initial payment so it could issue a writ of possession to Piatco 3.

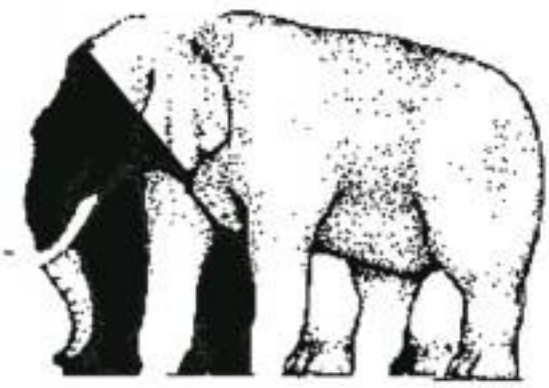
The payment of the P5.3 billion has however been stymied by various court motions to intervene in the expropriation case and angular payments on the area on the ground that it obtained the contract through fraud and corruption.

Last week, just as the government was ready to pay Piatco the P5.3 billion, the Court of Appeals, acting on a petition of Sen. Salvador Escudero III, issued an order against payment.

Airport chief Alberto Gsi yesterday appealed to Piatco to "maintain goodness" between using secret threat

government lawyers had already taken the necessary legal steps to

fill the appellate court's TRO. With a report from Miko Olano



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Captain erred, says shipping firm head

Front page A1

Agaoe said sources said the vessel was pitching forward, while others were members said it appeared to be listing on its right side.

The tanker Lutra sought shelter in the Iloilo anchorage off Guimaras to check on the vessel's condition. The crew learned that several compartments were filled with water and ran on were sent broken. After assessing the vessel and repairing the vent, the tanker resumed its trip to Zamboanga.

Agaoe said the weather was starting to become rough when it left. When the tanker first passed Guimaras, it decided to go to Zamboanga. He said the other day that the captain could have waited another day for the weather to clear and to determine what caused the water to come into the vessel.

Officials earlier questioned Agaoe's decision to go to Zamboanga. He said the other day that the captain could have waited another day for the weather to clear and to determine what caused the water to come into the vessel.

Agaoe said the captain made an erroneous call. Cesdo notified its agency's representative in matters of Solar 1 and defended Southeast Maritime's decision to take him despite having no specialized training in oil tanker operations.

Cuecio said the corporation was looking for a master mariner to steer Solar 1, which had previously been commanded by a second mate, and that one was not. He also said he believed Agaoe was qualified to handle the oil tanker because he was licensed to handle chemical tankers.

"When we looked at his licensee, it said there chemical tanker. We assumed that is chemical tanker is more dangerous than an oil tanker, that's why we hired him, your honor," the franchise Maritime president said, adding that the corporation had experience aboard other oil vessels.

Sunshine Maritime operations manager Luis Bitol also testified that Agaoe was hired because he was a master mariner.

But Bitol's supervisor Benjamin Blanca pointed out that under the rules of the Maritime Industry Authority (Marina), people whom the suspension would have must be certified for the kind of vessel they would operate.

Cuecio said that Agaoe, in the past four years, Agaoe's performance had been "satisfactory" and at times "very good," hence the decision to maintain him as Solar 1 master.

CADETS at the Maguayo Institute of Shipping line up on the deck in front of a red ship propeller on Wednesday while awaiting the arrival of President Macapagal-Arroyo for the inauguration of the INSI training facility in Barangay San Agustin, Dasmariñas, Cavite. LYN RILLON

But he also said the corporation had to hire an auxiliary captain to take over the docking of the Solar 1 at the Petron terminal in Bataan because Agaoe had violated several fleet operation's requirement that the tanker be brought in with a tugboat.

The DMR also found that Agaoe had expired certificates in general tanker familiarization and advanced training in chemical tanker operations. Four other crew members had expired general tanker familiarization certificates.

Cuecio said he would look into the certificates of Sunshine Maid Inn's other employees.

As for the tanker's expired vessels, document of compliance, which shows compliance with the code for the safe operation of ships and for pollution prevention, he said the corporation had applied for a new one. All other documents of the tanker were in order, the DMR found.

Cuecio also said the Marina had grounded Sunshine Maritime's other vessels after Solar 1 ran aground.

For his part, engineer Amando Bonda, the owner's technical representative during the drydocking of Solar 1 from Jan. 7 to Feb. 24, 2006, said he believed the vessel had been inspected thoroughly.

Bonda even said he did not think the continued hammering of waves and wind would cause structural damage to the tanker, in response to Mikiado's question.

Mikiado then told Bigger vessels had been destroyed by bad weather and rough seas and reported his operations during such conditions affecting the structural integrity of the tanker.

"It's not possible, sir," he said.

He also declined to give his opinion on why the Tanker sank.

Bonda also said most of the tanks, mid plates, piping and welding works in Solar 1 had been inspected and there were in good condition.

He said there had been rust observed in the ballast tanks, but added that the surveyor said it was "okay."

Bonda also said that he was not a regular employee of Sunshine Maritime and was only hired to oversee the drydocking of the vessel. He said he only had a verbal contract with the corporation.

In Makeadang, President Arroyo has ordered the Department of Transportation and Communications to conduct a thorough search of the seven Petron-chartered tanker of the ships and their crew in carrying hazardous chemicals to prevent a repeat of the Guimaras oil spill. With a report from MCC. Calimbahan in Jo

'With 2 to 3 typhoons, this will normalize'

Front page A1

has been described as a lifting entangled vines bunch, was not fled had affected.

He said it was the UP Visayas' first study and that more than half of the lumber had oil carried by Solar 1 was already cast to the sea.

Situation not as bad

The UP Visayas and the Department of Science and Technology have been designated as the clearinghouse of all information on the Guimaras oil spill.

Around 1.3 million liters are out. The leaving implication because the lumber brought by the water that needs to be sucked out," Yumul said at a press conference, adding that the situation in the water was not as bad as has been painted in initial reports.

PCG information officer Lt. Commander Joseph Custodio said protective cost of southern Mindanao from the BP Visayas.

He said that at least half a million liters of oil would leak into the waters of Guimaras in the next 10 days if the tankers owned was not salvaged.

Cuenco told the Pensamiento media house in Mandaluyong, San Juan, that however 500,000 and 700,000 liters of oil would leak in the next 10 days.

"Our computation is based on information of the surveyors as well as our visual survey. We have been monitoring the leak every day," he said.

Just estimates

Yumul said the first numbers—2.11 km of coastline, 434 ha of mangroves, 1,100 ha of marine reserves—were just estimates done of the "reconnaissance level" or at the initial stage of a study.

The Provincial Disaster Management Team of Negros has commissioned a radar satellite photo taking on Aug. 27 that showed the slicks 12 km to 29 km from the coast of Brg. Negros Occidental, with a large oil slick trailing further behind.

The slick threatens Negros Occidental's southern coastal municipalities, which include the towns of Cauayan, Brg. Escalante, Himamaylan, Binalbagan and Hinigaran, according to the World Wide Fund for Nature-Philippines.

The DENR, however, insisted that the oil spill had not yet reached or affected Negros Occidental, and that the oil sheen seen in the WWF photo could have been the kind of swallow ship that was released as it removed the Guimaras fluid.

"Negros has not been affected ... This whole thing has been blown out of proportion," Yumul said.

Wrong impression

Only 99.5 km of coastline in the southwestern part of Guimaras have been affected, but this could be more in the oil slick reaches and spreads out, according to the Guimaras environment officials.

"People have the impression that the whole Guimaras is affected, but if you look at the hazard maps and risk maps, you will see that the risk (of socio-ecological damage) is actually very minimal. The oil slick has affected only the southwestern part of the province," he said.

He said the ordinary mass were merely "layman's drawings" of the UP Visayas and that they were "wrong" because they gave the picture that the entire eastern part of Guimaras was affected.

He said experts from the UP Visayas had compared the volume of oil leaked based on the actual inventory of the tanker in the Tubong reserve, and the height and thickness of the slick.

Based on computations, around 40,000 liters of oil have affected the reserve.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources has issued a transport permit to Petron to allow the transfer of the oil sludge gathered from Guimaras shores to Bipan Dry, where a cement plant would process the sludge and turn it to cement.

"It's a win-to-say-the-damaged environment can never be restored," Yumul said.

The UP Visayas has been given at least P100 million of the Petron deal's calamity fund for a 10-year environmental and economic rehabilitation plan.

Rehabilitation efforts will start with the trees in six months," Yumul said.

Toxic fumes

Exposure to toxic fumes from the oil slick may have affected the 23 students of the La Paz Elementary School in Nueva Valencia town in Guimaras who were sent home yesterday morning after they complained of headache, stomachache and vomiting.

Earlier, the Department of Health said that three surgeons had detected exposure to oil with fumes.

The Regional Disaster Coordinating Council had reported 628 cases of respiratory diseases, dermatitis, conjunctivitis, diarrhea, abdominal pains, infected wound, vertigo and headache as of Monday.

Health officials earlier issued an advisory to residents to refrain from eating or selling fish, shellfish and other sea foods within the spill area.

Medical teams will be sent to the affected villages as many did, due to observing signs of fumes exposure in the spill.

The local government is also expected to evacuate more residents from villages affected by the massive oil spill in Guimaras as toxic fumes continue to take its toll on the health of residents.

Governor Valentin Rex Yap Dealdo Gonzaga said he soon was waiting for results of tests being conducted by the Department of Health to determine the toxicity of the oil and realize in villages affected by the spill.

He said the expected more villagers to be evacuated because the 11 coastal villages affected by the spill have generally the same level of exposure to the leaked fuel.

A total of 236 families or 400 residents in the villages of La Paz and Cabalagnan in Nueva Valencia town were evacuated from their homes near the shoreline on Tuesday because of high level of pollution. With a report from Carla P. Gomez, Inquirer Visayas

Slick-free resorts cash in on oil spill tourism

Front page A1

seeking from the massive oil slick from BP Solar 1, which ran on Aug. 11 in Guimaras Strait.

Working tourists

At slick-free Alubihod Beach here, four resorts have their hands full catering to the needs of a group of visitors—the "working tourists."

Wearing "oil spill getups," they go to oil-affected coastal barangays and take photos daily carrying any of the following: spades, cultivators and digital cameras, radio handsets and notebooks.

Since Aug. 16, Baywatch Beach Resort's 28 air-conditioned rooms and 14 ordinary rooms have been booked by more 60 Petron Corp. officials and employees, who are overseeing cleanup operations according to resort manager Salvacion Gonzalez.

Bayanan still found space to accommodate a crew of 16 people from reconstruction networks and the environment corporation International relief operators and national broadcasters.

The room charges P1,200 to P1,800 daily for air-conditioned rooms and P800 to P600 for ordinary rooms.

Alubihod operates as the resort of choice, since wedding guests are accommodated by nearby beach resorts Penlisan, Ilaya and Villa Igang.

Villa Igang is owned by the John B. Lacson Colleges Foundation that runs the resort as training ground for its maritime students.

All these resorts face Iloilo Strait and are accessible to the most heavily affected coastal barangays of Lapas and Tando, some 12 to 15 km away.

Canceled bookings

Still, Gonzalez laments the loss of the regular tourists, all of whom canceled their bookings after learning about the oil spill.

"We assume of explaining to them that we are far from the oil spill and that our operations are normal could dissuade our guests from canceling their bookings," sighed the 54-year-old manager.

Efraim Tendencia, tourism regional director, said that of the 24 resorts in Guimaras, only seven were affected by the oil spill, including Daguitan and Costa Aguada on Inampulugan Island where President Arroyo spent a weekend. Since the spill brought no guests for 20 days, they have turned over to the island after the oil spill.

Foregone revenue

The tourism industry lost over P1.37 million in foregone revenue from Aug. 11 to 27 as 17 tourism establishments in the province reported canceled bookings, according to Tendencia.

High-end resort Costa Aguada, owner of Pahiyumbalay, Bayera Occidental, and southeast of Iloilo City lamented much from the President's Aug. 18 visit despite being given only a day's notice.

The 66-room resort, owned by the family of Tony Oppen, was left with some guests when Mr. Arroyo and her entourage fled.

Boat ride to Iloilo

Costa Aguada charges P4,000 daily for a single room and P7,400 for a room for four during the off-peak season of June 1 to Sept. 15.

Because Costa Aguada was fully booked during the President's visit, some guests chose to endure the almost one-hour boat ride back to Iloilo City or mainland Guimaras.

Some journalists proceeded to neighboring Nagasao Island because frequented by European tourists who at this time were nowhere to be seen.

"We still expect that tragedy will not happen to us. The oil spill gives us free promotions. The name recall for Guimaras is very high. That should be converted into a positive thing for us," said Ruben Corpuz, Guimaras provincial economic development officer.

Aside from beach and island resorts, Guimaras offers agri-tourism, mountain hiking and spelunking.

Battle of Ninoy movies looms; 14 convicts to present 'truth'

Front page A1

more, let the shooters, if given parole through.

Carlo J. Caparas and his production—Mr. Dennis Villa, documentarist and producer said the two movies are similar chasing a meeting as the 1987 Senate Bill, said Caparas.

Caparas yesterday told the Inquirer that the convicts did not reject the planned movies to help present their true, but said they let the Filipino might instead be lured from not knowing their role of the story which, they maintain, is the truth.

Curiously, unlike movie about Ninoy Aquino is expected to be a historical action and not to start principal photography in January, with Cesar Montano as producer and lead star and award-winning director Marilou Diaz-Abaya at the helm.

The two movies may be taking different points of view. Since Montano's movie apparently tells the blessings of the Aquinos and not solely on the President Cory Aquino, it is less likely to be sympathetic with the convicts.

Nothing new

Asked yesterday to confirm reports that Montano, the producer-actor said he and Mrs. Aquino still had to thrash out details regarding the execution of "the various scenes"—when Ninoy is gunned down at the Manila International Airport.

It was reportedly the most sensitive sequence in his movie, said Montano, although it would only be a small part of the whole. "The movie is about Senator Aquino, the man—husband, father, friend..."

Proposals to film the victims' story are not exactly new. Caparas noted.

He said the idea was lobbied in the early '90s and has been brought up several times in newsmags among himself. Public Attorney's Office chief Persida Rueda-Acosta and Prosecutor against Crimes and Corruption chair Conte Jimenez. They are seeking presidential pardon for the 14 convicts.

After the Supreme Court denied with finality in May 2000 the convictors' petitions to upset the case, the Jimenezes because more hopeful. Caparas said. They got the chance to meet with Ca. parao early on Monday, he added.

The soldiers have languished in jail for 15 years now, all the while maintaining their innocence in the assassination of Aquino and his alleged security, Rolando Galman.

There were 16 of them convicted mostly members of the Aviation Security Command: Capt. Romeo Rodilla, 2nd Lt. Jesus Castro, Sergeants Claro Lat, Arnulfo de Mesa, Filomeno Miranda, Rolando de Guzman, Ernesto Mateo, Rodolfo Estoborg, Ruben Gonzales and Arnulfo Reyes; Cpls. Romeo Bagtilo Moreno and Mario Lanuza, Airmen Godofredo Ilanda and Belarmino Turat, Sgt. Hilario Tolentino and Brig. Gen. Luther Custodio.

Rueda was killed in a stabbing incident in the detention center where he was confined.

Custodio was released in 2003 after succumbing to cancer in 1993 while confined at the Villamor Air Base.

All 14 had escaped Aquino down a Clute Airline plane on his execution route to the United States.

Recently, BFOI Ruben Custodio Sudan, driver of the van, and Martinez surfaced and pointed to Galman as the real gunman. Martinez also confessed that he was part of the assassination plot, stressing that his fellow soldiers were not guilty.

Dragnet yesterday said Villa is as suggested making the soldiers' story into a television series. "It would be more convenient than a documentary or a full-length film," he said, quoting Caparas' wife.

"Whatever the final decision, the filmmakers said the movie would also tackle the lives of the ex-soldiers behind bars, aside from the cycle behind the killing of Ninoy," the chapters said.

There will be another meeting next week, Dalgren added, this time with Rueda-Acosta.

Caught by surprise

The news of Caparas' project obviously caught Montano by surprise.

"I have no idea he was planning his own biopic movie," the actor said. "I'm not sure if it is true or not, although as a fellow filmmaker, I personally wouldn't have done that, knowing a similar project was under way."

Montano stressed that, all in all, "I guess it's OK." But if he can do about that, "I'll have to discuss earlier? "There's really very little I can do about that," he said. Otherwise, "But again, I'm sure the two movies will be very different."

France joins calls for GMA to stop political killings

FRANCE ON WEDNESDAY JOINED CALLS for President Macapagal-Arroyo's administration to do more to stop a spate of political killings.

"It's important to decrease the level of violence," said French foreign affairs minister Bernard Bajolet.

"I can speak as a diplomat living in Manila and I can see what the newspapers are reporting every day and then see clearly disappearances in the Philippines. Disappearances are not something acceptable in the democratic society," Pahut said on the sidelines of a United Nations Convention Against Corruption session.

"There are killings as well (and) journalists are one of the victims. It is a very important thing to assume them of their ability to work," he added.

Leftist groups have accused the government of being behind a string of killings and disappearances, saying that at least 304 of their members have been killed since Ms Arroyo came to power in 2001.

International press watchdog groups have criticized Ms Arroyo for failing to give adequate protection to journalists following the murder of at least four this year. Seven were also killed in 2005, making the Philippines the most dangerous Asian country place for journalists after Iraq.

But Pahut said he was optimistic that the killings would be curbed after Ms Arroyo created a commission to look into political murders.

AFP

ENGLISH of victims of forced disappearances light candles at Plaza Miranda in Manila on Wednesday. The group also joined the interfaith memorial service for victims of human-rights violations under the Arroyo administration. At right, Marjorie Salvador, 5, holds a photo of one of the victims. ERIK MARCELINO

Probers tag soldiers in Albay pastor's murder

Front page A1

The team's conclusion was based on evidence the local police took from Cpl. Lucigen Bancuan, who was found dead beside the Bancuan the night of the killing.

Among these were Pastrana's identification card showing that he was a member of the 9th ID based in Pili, Camarines Sur, a .45-cal. pistol, a mission order, and a cellular phone allegedly taken from Sta. Rosa's house.

Pastrana was believed to be one of the gunmen. He was reportedly accidentally shot by his own men while they were trying to subdue a fleeing Sta. Rosa. Cornio said the corporal took a bullet in the right side of his body while the pastor died of six gunshot wounds.

"He still on (Medic) to hold dialogues with church people," the United Methodist Church said in a statement. "Representatives of the churches whose pastors and members have become victims of brutal killings, attempted killings, grave threats and harassment are willing to confer with (Medic) to provide him information on the 23 cases of clergy and lay members killed."

Widow blames military

Asked if she was open to an extrajudicial finding by the Melo Commission, Sta. Rosa's widow Emma said she was convinced that her husband was killed by the military.

"From the very start, we know it was the military," she said in the press conference.

"This is the handiwork of the Army. They took him, bound him, then shot him on (the) head," said Sta. Rosa's many-eyed brother Jonathan.

Leftist groups put the number of political killings at around 700, including combatants. The Inquirer counts 247 such murders.

No sacred cows

Butuan Bishop Juan de Dios Pueblos on Monday said the commission would first look into the disappearance of two University of the Philippines students—Jonden Cadapan, 21, and Karen Empeño, 23—who were allegedly abducted by the military.

Also yesterday, the National Council of Churches in the Philippines challenged the Melo Commission to make true its promise to open no sacred cows and investigate even President Macapagal-Arroyo in connection with the current political killings.

Sharon Bautrantes, the NCCP secretary general, said the commission should not "just dig out the trash but (also) to serve justice by punishing (but) both the killers and the masterminds are made accountable."

"We do not want the Melo Commission to be like the other bodies created by the government in the past which were ineffective, to say the least," Bautrantes said in a statement. "We don't want this Melo Commission to be ineffective," added Rev. Fr. Rex Reyes Jr. of the NCCP.

Rev. Dr. David Pascua urged the commission to "use your powers to defend life in the country today."

Give Melo a chance

In Cebu City, Archbishop Ricardo Cardinal Vidal urged the public to give Melo a chance to prove himself. He welcomed Melo's statement that there would be no sacred cows in his investigation and expressed hopes that the killings would be solved.

"We should give the commission a chance. They should be free and independent. Digest sealing petroleum (there should be no spilling of sewage) otherwise there would be no end to it," Vidal yesterday told the reporters.

Vidal has denounced the summary killings of activists and journalists as well as the right-to-life shootings of priests, clergy and other persons. He has joined the call of other religious and cause-oriented groups in unconditional the murders.

The Cebu archbishop earlier declined to be part of the commission to preserve the independence of the Catholic Church. With a report from Jolene R. Bolanoso, Inquirer Visayas

FILIPINO protesters hold placards as they take part in a rally at the Philippine Consulate in Hong Kong on Wednesday to mark the International Day of the Disappeared. AFP/FILE

Police offer to protect businessmen targeted by NPA

Front page A1

real factions of the leftist movement. Groups opposed to the leadership of CPP founder Jose Ma. Sison, who is based in The Netherlands, are called "rejectionists," and those who recognize it, as "reaffirmists."

No ideology

"The RJMs, nowadays, are not living on ideology. Many have joined this organization for monetary and financial considerations," Calderon said.

He also found that intelligence units were working to get the alleged extortionists but none of them was known to have made significant progress.

Calderon urged businessmen not to give in to NPA demands.

"Definitely we discourage (them from giving. Instead (they should) give to the necessary information, like who are the collectors, where is the collection time, so we could coordinate proper operations against these people," he said.

Assuring specific information is handed to the (NG) Calderon said police would be able to "neutralize these groups."

Urged to do more

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita also said leftist party-list representatives "must make more concrete statements to show how serious they are in putting an end to these gross human rights violations."

He said Bonito and other lefty of views party-list representatives should not only come up with a stronger voice condemning the NPA's tax collection but also make moves that these things do not happen again.

Ermita praised Bonito as a deserving member of Congress, one who "uses the (d)emocratic fora what they are—human rights violations."

He said the CPP and the National Democratic Front were hypocritical for claiming to be "propeople" when they had done nothing but "reduce" the people with their progressive tenancies.

"The NPA has become even more desperate in their extortion activities especially now that their peace talks with the government have dried up after being labeled as a terrorist group by the European Union, the United States, and Canada," said Ermita. He added that the blacklisting of the CPP-NPA was a "strategic victory" for the government.

While nothing had positively urged businessmen to stop paying revolutionary taxes in order to further cripple the financial capability of the communist rebels as part of President Macapagal-Arroyo's declaration of an all-out war against the insurgency.

But businessmen continued to pay rather than risk having their assets torched or vandalized largely due to their skepticism on the government's ability to give them protection.

Blessing sought

Also yesterday, a spokesperson of the local communist guerrilla unit said in a telephone interview with the Inquirer in Lanuza City that politicians were now beginning to make a beeline in a bid to gain NPA support in the May 2007 elections.

"They lobied mountainous trails and crossed several enemy detachments just to reach us. They brought with them the usual gifts for the boys like cigarettes, foods, etc. Moreover, they even drove through certain critical centers," said Ka Antonio de Tesis of the NPA Apolonio Mendoza Command.

He added: "But are concerned problems before we accepted gifts, especially from opportunistic politicians." With reports from MDC Cabuyao and Dr. Emilio T. Mollet I.N., Inquirer Southern Luzon

India taxman shows way in fight against corruption

Front page A1

Chay, government service; South Korea's Park Pilse-moon, public service, and Brazil's Sandra Kiai, promoting peace and international understanding.

Grass-roots movement

Kejriwal said it was his experiments in the Indian Revenue Service that led him to think about ways to curb corruption. In 2000, he founded the Parivartan—meaning "change"—a grass-roots movement that aimed to "address extortionate type of corruption where a person has to pay a bribe to get his legitimate dues from government."

At that time, he said, people had to pay bribes to enjoy even basic services, such as right water and telephone connections. He said his group started urging the people "not to pay bribes" and offered to facilitate their requests with the government agencies.

When the Right to Information Act (RTI) was enacted, Kejriwal, through Parivartan, started assisting the law in following up applications for basic services.

Power than bribes

"In ordinary circumstances, such an application would be thrown into a dustbin. But this law says that they have to reply within 30 days. If they don't, their salary will be deducted," Kejriwal said.

In another instance, the law was also used to conduct "social audit" of 60 public works projects. According to Kejriwal, it was exposed in a public hearing that the project proponents had misappropriated some seven million rupees.

Invoking the law, Parivartan gathered official records showing how shopkeepers and senior fund disbursement officials conspired to forge documents to collect money and siphon millions from the government.

Kejriwal, however, said the RTI should not be taken as a "panacea to all ills." He said it should not be construed also as a fight against the government.

"RTI is an extremely powerful weapon in our hands. It can be an equally potent weapon available to the people to use this weapon with extreme care and responsibility," he said. "We should ask for accounts from the government and about its activities, not to find faults with them but as a process and as part of our duty to engage in our democracy."

People's Choice
SUPER BRAND
GOLD 2005
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GOLD 2003
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GOLD 2001
GOLD 2000
GOLD 1999
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BL-GC4
Philippine Exclusive Distributor
COSMOS BAZAR, INC.
PILOT CORPORATION

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The entry of major agri-business investors opened job opportunities for localities and made North Cotabato the leading province in jobs generation in Region 12.

Previously uncultivated portion of Barangay Pug-aw in Pikit town plant oil palm seedlings as the Malaysian-run Mountbell Oil Palm Plantation.

Gov. Pikit inspects asphalting of the Kidapawan-Pikit provincial road using the provincial government's newly acquired asphalt paving equipment.

Eight years after it was listed as the 5 province in the country, North Cotabato XII's top achiever

"We were a basket case in the 1990s," says Gov. Emmanuel F. Pikit who took over the leadership of the province in 1998.

"We were wrecked by conflict and violence which rendered much of our people poor, lacking trust in government, and seemingly hopeless. Among the very first that greeted me as local chief executive was a huge throng of hungry farmers who were suffering from the effects of El Niño which rendered their farms unproductive."

This year, the National Statistics Coordination Board ranked North Cotabato 29th among the country's most progressive provinces with the least poverty incidence, new to Bangsamoro and a rank higher than South Cotabato.

"That survey, which we did not commission and which we were never aware of, proved that what we have done over the last 8 years really made a great change in the lives of the people for the province of North Cotabato," Gov. Pikit says.

As early as two years ago, North Cotabato has become Region XII's favorite investment area with three major agri-business firms involved in Cotabato's banana production as leading investors.

The province gained a total of P397.09 million worth of investments in 2004, ranking second (2nd) only to General Santos City. This was a tremendous 113-percent leap in investments which the Department of Trade and Industry 12 acknowledged as the biggest in the region.

The Cotabato Provincial Investment Promotion Center (CPIPC) has recorded total investment made in the province from 2000 to 2004 at almost P1 billion.

This influx of investments has created opened more job opportunities for workers in the province. New jobs generated by these investments from 2000 to 2001 reached almost 89,000, making Cotabato the leading province in job generation in the region, according to DOLE-12.

These developments have also ushered in other benefits—improvement of road networks, conversion of grasslands into productive areas, increase in business establishments in the investment areas thus improving the quality of life of residents and increased real property tax collections. It has also impacted on the age-long insurgency problem like Sinsakala and Andaan, where the establishment of a more stable source of income and better living conditions have weakened the influence of CPP-NPA-NDF.

Investing in development

Implementing a solid rural infrastructure development program was among the first moves Governor Pikit upon assuming office in 1998.

Investments were made to beef up the capabilities of the Provincial Engineering Office. Heavy equipment and barangay roads were rehabilitated and maintained, while new ones were opened to further improve the delivery of basic services.

Infrastructure projects which included the rehabilitation of farm-to-market roads, construction of spring development projects, communal irrigation projects, and installation of water systems were implemented in cooperation with the Mindanao Development Program and the Department of Public Works and Highways.

With the approval of the Governor Pedalino, the provincial government acquired a P38 million asphalt batching plant and other road construction equipment worth almost P65-M.

Cotabato's rural infrastructure program now enters a new phase with the asphalting of provincial roads. The first in South Cotabato's asphalting program is the Apo Sandawa-Ilagan portion of the Kidapawan City-Pikit provincial road.

Work is also ongoing on the Kabacan-Bagontapay-Bagontapay Road project, a joint project of the provincial government and the Municipality of Tulunan.

Considered as one of the most important infrastructure projects in the province, the airport is one of the best options in shipping out agricultural products from the province to other parts of the country. Aside from the airport, the province is also blessed with a number of seaports that serve as outlets for its agricultural products.

Former Moro fighters from the MalMar Irrigation Project area inspect farm machineries provided to them through the PRRP Social Fund being managed by the SEED MalMar program of the provincial government.

Gov. Pikit hands over an oil palm seedling as a resident of Barangay Bolod in Pikit town. The former war-torn barangay now has 46 hectares planted to oil palm.

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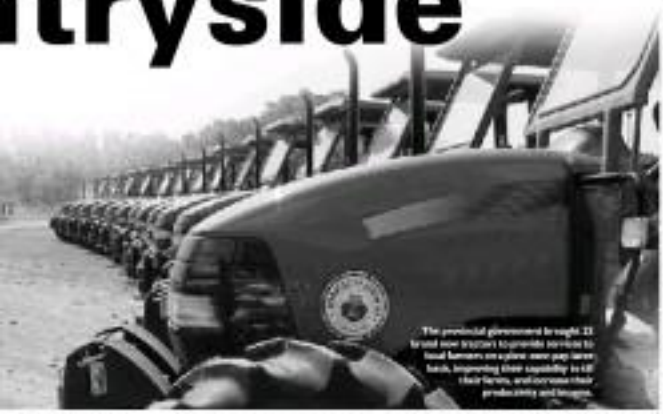

The provincial government is eyeing 22 brand new tractors to provide service to local farmers on a piso-per-day rental basis, improving their capability to till their farms, and increase their productivity and income.

Gov. Manny Piñol shares kids from an elementary school in the largely Manobo community of Pras Bata picture-frame view of the many books given to the school under the provincial government's Books For Peace program.

5th poorest
is now Region

Republic of the Philippines
Region XII
PROVINCE OF COTABATO
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
Amas, Kidapawan City

My dear people of North Cotabato,

As we celebrate our 92nd Foundation Anniversary with this year's Hiyasgana Festival, I find it opportune to look back at our story for the past eight years. Ours is a story of a people's struggle and of a people's victory.

We were a garbage can in the 1990s. We were the fifth poorest province in the country, wracked by conflict and violence which rendered much of our people poor, unproductive, lacking trust in government, and seemingly hopeless.

Faced with this sad reality when I assumed office as Governor in 1998, I had to ask myself – how do I love my people? How do I improve their lives? How do I make sure that when children still be sickness or they cross a day, go to school, and have a better future? How do I make sure that at night when they sleep in their homes, in their barangays, in their fields, there would be no fear in their hearts? That they can sleep soundly, secured that the following day when they wake up, the sun will be out and they will be able to work in their farms.

The challenges we faced then were tremendous and daunting.

We were overwhelmed with limited health services, inadequate water, the absence of access to credit and financing, lack of education, lack of transportation and inaccessible communities. It was a vicious circle that reflected a seemingly unending cycle of massive poverty and social injustice.

In our choice to achieve for our people a better quality of life which undoubtedly has long been overdue there, we set for our self a program of governance that would address what we perceived to be the key socio-economic and political concerns that are crucial to fighting poverty and social injustice in North Cotabato.

We started our rural development efforts, resisting investments in rural infrastructure, investments in changing the development mindset of our leaders and people, investments in peace and in our youth, and a refocused agricultural development program emerging as our strategies.

With the implementation of the different programs designed to improving people's productivity, regaining their confidence in government, we slowly moved up, and it was not until last year when we reliably recalibrated our records we have done.

We were astounded when we saw ourselves in Region XII two years in a row. We were number 1 in jobs generation. And this year, the National Statistics Coordination Board, which surveys the whole country every year in terms of poverty incidence among families in each locality came up with the data that we consider indicating that from being the fifth poorest province in the country in 1998, we jumped 3 ½ ranks up to the tenth.

Today we are ranked 29th among the most progressive provinces, behind Pangasinan, and not only higher than South Cotabato. To the best of my knowledge, we are the only province that made it a point to ensure that the things that we have done worked well for the people.

That survey which we did not commission and which we were never aware of, proved that what we have done over the last 8 years really made a great change in the lives of the people for the province of North Cotabato.

To me the greatest achievement of my leader is seeing that the lives of his people have improved and seeing that they welcome the new that with youths on their faces.

My dream as governor of this province has always been to build a community where people can walk to a new day with a smile on their faces, are able to send their children to school, able to feed their children three times a day, and live in a community where there is no conflict, where Muslims, Christians, each health of purpose understand the meaning of harmony of unity and of the common search for a better life.

We have moved closer to the fulfillment of this dream – enough for us to celebrate life, peace, and prosperity with Hiyasgana!

Maraming salamat sa North Cotabato!

EMMANUEL PIÑOL
Governor

Enhancing agricultural productivity

Gov. Piñol has always believed that Cotabato's agriculture is its main asset.

With the aim of helping Cotabato farmers increase their ability to work their lands, and enhance their productivity, he embarked on a countless financial programs early in his administration, and have moved towards providing more modern agricultural services to farmers through a provincial tractor pool.

The provincial government acquired 22 units of tractors which provided field preparation services through zero-interest schemes to farmers financially incapable of procuring their equipment and implements.

The tractors acquired in 2005 covered a total area of 6,077 hectares in various municipalities around the province to the first quarter of operation alone.

The setting up of the tractor pool also provided jobs for the operators.

Policy redirection from traditional to market-oriented agriculture

"In North Cotabato, rice and corn farmers speak English whenever harvest time comes," Gov. Piñol told participants of the Cotabato Media Summit held recently in Kidapawan City by the Publishers' Association of the Philippines, Incorporated (PAPI).

"They talk of 'hectare' and 'overdrafts'. The crop loan price they get for their harvest hardly compensates for production expenses. South rubber growers too, a lot better. They are able to send their children to college, and even get to drink cold beer regularly."

With rubber as flagship commodity, the provincial government made a crucial shift in Cotabato's agricultural direction, deciding that the province should have a market-oriented agriculture.

The provincial government identified four major products to be given massive support: cashews, banana, hybrid coconut seedlings, oil palm seedlings.

₱7.2 Billion was invested in 2005 for the development of these high-value commercial crops. Recently the Sangguniang Panlalawigan approved the allocation of an additional ₱3.0 million for rubber and 10 other ₱1.0 million oil palm development.

Riding on the rubber ramp

Rubber is, however, the commodity that Gov. Piñol focus on upbeat about.

"The high demand for rubber in the world market presents an opportunity for better income and employment for our farmers. It will not only generate more dollars for the economy, but can help uproot, directly in the growing of the Philippines," Gov. Piñol noted.

"500 million trees planted in 1 million hectares in a 10-year rubber development program will provide 100,000 more jobs, ₱150 billion in foreign earnings, and ₱3.5 Billion in fund taxes."

Cotabato's rubber advocacy has since gained momentum.

During the opening program of the week-long celebration of North Cotabato's 92nd foundation anniversary last year, Agriculture Secretary Domingo Panganiban brought good news to the people of North Cotabato the map of ₱5 million initial support funds for the provincial government's rubber development program.

"We fund has been used to finance the provincial government's barangay-based rubber development program which set up rubber seedling nurseries in the different barangays to provide planting materials to farmers on a phase-by-phase basis.

Rubber has been made part of the BA-LINK-DKBS Convergence Program, and DENR Undersecretary Manny Gerochi has pronounced to include rubber in the agency's reforestation program in areas where it would be suitable.

The national rubber program is set to be launched in the Cotabato provincial government by agriculture Secretary Domingo Panganiban today, August 31, during the weeklong foundation anniversary celebration of the province which culminates tomorrow, September 1.

Celebrating hope

"To me the greatest achievement of my leader is seeing that the lives of his people have improved, seeing that they welcome the new day with a smile on their faces, a sign of hope-filled life in a land with a brighter future," Gov. Piñol says.

"We have moved closer to the fulfillment of this dream."

The provincial government set up an experience-scale barangay-based rubber nursery development program as part of its enhanced agricultural development program harnessed by rubber.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

THURSDAY, AUGUST 31, 2006

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

OPINION

Worse punishment

SOME 17,000 NURSING GRADUATES WHO HURdled the board examinations last June must now be feeling greatly relieved. It means to be just a matter of time before they will be allowed to take their professional oath without having to take the exams all over again or even just the two subjects whose results had been set aside on account of cheating.

EDITORIAL

Although groups of nurses, educators and students have been able to stop the oath-taking by getting the Court of Appeals to issue a temporary restraining order, President Macapagal-Arroyo has said she doesn't want those who made the grade to take the exams again. In a radio interview last Monday, Ms Arroyo said she had directed Chair Leonor Tripon-Rosero of the Professional Regulation Commission "to look for a solution to the problem to punish only the guilty without punishing the innocent."

First on the list of innocents was Rosero herself, whom Ms Arroyo declared to be blameless. "The PRC chairperson is responsible for a lot of exams and this is the only one that had problems," she explained. In other places, more would have been enough, given the embarrassment and damage the scandal has wreaked on the examinees, the nursing profession, the PRC and the entire system of administering tests to determine admission into the various professions. And there's little reason to believe—as the President does—that this one time when a leakage was exposed was the only time cheating happened in professional licensure examinations. So how many more "problems" have to develop during Rosero's watch before she is given her walking papers? Will the President count 7 times 70 times?

Ms Arroyo agrees with many examinees and their supporters that to order new exams would be to punish the guilty and the innocent alike. But how does one separate one group from the other, considering the number of review centers and schools that allegedly got copies of the examination questions? And how can anyone be sure the leakage didn't find its way to other examinees?

Making the examinees take a second test would undoubtedly be an added burden to their families, who will have to shoulder the expenses for their reviews, their travel and the testing fee. But that's one problem that can be solved quite easily. Help, in fact, is being offered by various sectors. At least three of the country's best nursing schools have agreed to open their doors to graduates who want to review. The Philippine Nurses Association of America is reportedly raising funds to help the graduates. On Tuesday, the House of Representatives approved a P14-million allocation for the examinees if new exams are ordered. In addition, the PRC can—or should realize—the testing fee. And the exams can be held in various cities to cut travel.

But while the added financial burden to the examinees' families is being underscored by those who oppose the holding of fresh exams, the more formidable obstacle is really the reluctance of the graduates to submit to a new test. To those who passed the exams honestly, going through another test constitutes an unfair and undeserved punishment.

But unless they do it, they are likely to suffer a more crippling and cruel punishment, which is being denied the opportunity to practice their profession. Some graduates who have applied for training or employment have been turned away by various hospitals. The Philippine General Hospital, for one, has announced that it would not be accepting nurses from the batch of June examinees. The University of Sto. Tomas which has been pushing for new exams is unlikely to welcome them. If local hospitals refuse to accept them, can they realistically hope to be hired by foreign ones? For many, a refusal to take a new test could mean the end of their American dream or any dream they have of making a decent living for themselves and for their families.

It's harrowing closer than a punishment worse than taking a new test awaits the unhappy and unlucky batch of nursing graduates. Unfortunately, our officials are not about to stop them from taking that course.

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Democracy of the dead?

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

"ON THE DEMOCRACY OF THE DEAD ALL ARE at least equal," the old saying claims. But in this country and region, many into the economy's classless society to which steeped. Death rates among tribute basic of poor families are "two or three times higher than those for the rich," Asian Development Bank reveals.

Birth in good outcomes or fetal classs determines who go into earlier graves—an obscene inequality. "Equal opportunity to good but special privilege is heresy," a political heresy cynically traps.

These inequities arise in "Alleviating Policy Inconsistencies in Health and Education" the theme chapter of which it weaves into ADB's 2006 Key Indicators. A research by Ajay Tandon rounds the 75-page chapter. It marshals the most recent studies to "frame an analytical framework," she told policymakers. "We've got ground to fathom filing inequalities that have ossified into inequity.

Countries like China, India and Singapore have surged economically showing "unacceptably large proportions of Asia's population remain more poor and vulnerable."

Out of some 1,000 Chinese, 45 still scrape by on $2 a day for Filipinos, the corresponding number is 44 and for Indonesia 32. "There are staggeringly large numbers, amounting to almost 1 billion people."

Education is the ancient escape hatch from poverty. "How can one in existing levels of income buy," the Chinese proverb asks, but that job is molded dear for many. Poorer households are almost three times more likely to be out of school than those of richer households.

They confirm and cemented reasons are visible indicators of disparities in health. Infectious diseases like tuberculosis, pneumonia, malaria and HIV/AIDs. "A large proportion of these are concentrated in poor households, areas of poverty, crowded living quarters, unfair, hotel and outdoor air pollution, unsafe drinking water and improper sanitation."

So, simple measures can dramatically trim the number of graves. "Improving access to antidiabetic water by 10 percent could reduce a region's under-five child mortality by 5 percent," a World Health Organization study asserts.

How do these dull figures worth out in human terms, for instance, the Jara Jara Dead? There, 80 out of every 100 students drink from other polluted wells. Add a liter of clean water to the 10 available, studies show, and kids in "least" places, "live to semi-grey hair"?

That's the significance of the recently completed government's NDB project to provide water to 10 small towns. Safe water flowed from the taps of 2.1 million people—68 percent of them living below poverty levels.

"In kids are capture the divergence in human development more powerfully than child mortality," UN's Human Development Report 2005 asserts. Here, 27 out of every 1,000 die at childbirth—better than Laos' tragic 82 but far behind Malaysia's 7. "Discovery stops from the knowledge of what is possible," UN parliamentarian Jeremy Rifkin once said.

Thus, 186 countries signed, in 1990, to whittle down infant mortality rates by two-thirds by 2015. By 2003 now past the halfway mark of this time-bound Millennium Development Goal, Pilipinas do are caught.

The Philippines clocked in at 68 percent of target. That's better than Thailand's 60 percent, but it trails Vietnam's 85 percent. Infant deaths tragically increased in Cambodia and Bangladesh. And there's been only "negligible" progress in halving malnutrition by 2015.

A comparison of demographic/health surveys from the Philippines, Bangladesh, Indonesia and Kazakhstan found: "Inequalities in child mortality, by wealth level, increased from the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s." Health facilities are lopsided, not only between the rich and the poor, but also between the rural and the urban populations.

A study of 45 countries reveals that "public spending matters significantly for the health of the poor." The Philippines, like most Asian countries, spend less than $100 per capita for health. "One cannot expect public expenditure to be effective if there is not enough being spent to begin with." The health DBM limit not only be big-ger but also be shifting more to the poorer provinces.

But no amount of money will improve health if it's "spent inefficiently to begin with." In many countries, much goes for "activities that yield low marginal improvements. Large sums go for tertiary hospitals while rural primary health centers run dry."

The "lack of funds" excuse doesn't wash at all. Health services in Kerala in India and Sri Lanka proved far better than in other better-endowed governments. Shoddy health services often signify "lack of political will or inability to implement effective social policies," i.e., lack of backbone and consequences.

Experience shows dramatic improvements can come from results-focused interventions on precisely defined impoverished groups, ADB says. These include food fortification, school health programs, midday meals, conditional cash transfers, food for education, etc.

Policymakers must move beyond rhetoric and adopt corrective policies. For that, they will have to swap political platitudes for rigorous analysis of why donor death rates remain stubbornly high. That is the only basis for effective corrective policies.

One more thing: Policymakers must be held accountable for the remaining deficiencies," for this is not just another "expensive hypothetical exercise." This is nothing hope for a richer life.

"I do who has health has hope," the old Arabic saying goes. "And he who has hope has everything."

* * *

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Naked truth

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

THAT WAS AN AWESOME THING THE 10 students did last Monday in answer to Raul Gonzalez's remarks about what the University of the Philippines had become. It was the perfect response to it. No, more than that, it was the most poetic response to it.

Last weekend, Gonzalez derided UP for having become the breeding ground of dumbbells and the lacking in breeding ground of intelligentsia. Well, he didn't say the latter, he doesn't have the imagination for it, what he said was that it was "impossible" to find intelligent people on campus. He said UP students should really be doubled: their government was spending to educate them.

The kids responded by having 15 of their fellows run around the campus in their pristine state in a re-enactment of the Diliman Dare traditionally done around Christmas. Who says you can't have Christmas in August? The fun wasn't just meant to regale the audience; many of whom were evident, with the truth about the body electric, it meant to expose to them the truth about the body politic.

As the set-up has it, the kids did bring out some naked truths that the justice secretary can no longer see. Chief of them is when they owed for their education. As University Student Council chair Jose Isidro Alfonso pointed out, it was the people who were paying for their education, not government. Taxpayers' money is money that belongs to the people, not to final comedies or last hoos. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. Tyrants, petty or otherwise, do have a way of forgetting that pristine truth. Tyrants, petty or otherwise, have a way of thinking that money entrusted to them by the people to be used for the people is theirs to dispense with as they like, or keep for themselves.

At the very least, the kids did bring out some naked truths there: so called elders and betters—so, pretty nearly the rest of their country—have been so fixated on Chief of Staffs to that we have been plunged back right into martial law and are compelled to fight with the same weapons the previous generation used to fight martial law. The Olalias that arose in much the same circumstances as today, the kids protesting epic lukewarm. It began one fine day in 1977 when five students ran naked to the campus to promote the play "Hubad na Bayani" ["Naked Hero"], omitting Archbishop Olivero. "Hubad na Bayani," of course, sounds like "Hawad na Bayani" ["Fake Hero"], which was what Marcos was. We had a joke here then, we have a joke President now, both without a mandate to rule. The kids stripped the fakeness from Marcos' medals-then, the kids are stripping the fakeness from GMA's votes now.

If I recall right, UP went on to become a bastion of right-wing opposition to the martial law. The UP Collegian in particular trained its where the national newspapers feared to tread, and the UP Law Center went boldly on where others had not gone before. If the UP people can summon that vibe in these new times of darkness and despair, they all my prayers to the God of Pardo de Tavera go with them.

Sidelines is the perfect metaphor, or reference is phrase from U.S. films, the perfect "objective correlative," on these seventies as we revisit that today. Democracy is transparent, certainly a epitaph. Democracy is plain to see, tyranny hides behind camouflages. Democracy is naked, tyranny wraps itself up in Cloth of deception.

Democracy is brandish in all its relentless, tyranny is ugly in all its cover-ups.

The guardians of Filipino morals, who bristle at the sight of nakedness in movies and elsewhere, including my life, will of course fall against this as an affront to Good Manners and Right Conduct. They are probably the same people who railed against "Batrisia Pangilinan for building her schools guest of honor, who happened to be DSS, during their graduation. Well, I've said my piece about Pangilinan. She at least was a genuine graduate, the greatest star a fake President. She at least had earned how she got by hard work, the greatest bad man has to do by fiats.

The Olalias from way way well for the shock treatment this country needs in strip it of the its silliness and cynicism that now covers its heart like callouses and its soul like barnacles: in the way it has, it shows up a justice secretary who finds shocking the sight of kids displaying their formidable talent to a giggling world), but finds perfectly just and respectable the sight, or sound, of a condition plotting with "a Gonzalez official" to kidnap a poll watcher who is protesting fraud; it shows up a justice secretary who finds outrageous the sight of kids parading before the world the things they ought to be answering up, but finds perfectly lawful and godly the sight of Garci, Joc Joc and all the other officials the Senate has been trying to summon in vain, covering up the things they ought to be parading before the world.

But never mind the justice secretary. He doesn't need help from outside to show himself up, he does a good job of it himself every time he opens his mouth. Mind only ourselves or what we have become, a people who have lost the capacity to weep and ground our teeth at the sight of so much death and dishing. What a truly sickened, the sight of naked bodies traipsing gleefully in the groves of academe or the sight of bodies caked in blood and being taken by the scores to the pockets of Nueva Ecija and Isabela, courtesy of our justice Department?

Democracy is resplendently robed in all its nakedness. Tyranny is obscenely naked in all its finery.

Punish the board wrongdoers

DOUBTLESS, I BELONG TO THE MAJORITY who find that most nursing graduates who took the June 2006 board exams were the victims and so they should not be punished. However, am glad that the very small fraction who took part in that scam would be very hard to do. The ones who ought to be punished are the nursing board officials who leaked out the questions, some of the heads of certain nursing schools (a clear case of synthesis of interest), the years review centers have plagued the Professional Regulation Commission's boards and it's time they are cleaned up and punished, too, for good.

As under a the regulation of our exams, especially those aspiring to work abroad. Which is a pity, for until this scam, they enjoyed a good reputation in our books with British Ambassador Peter Hockaday, who is now back in Britain, where the chief nurse, whom he did help was quite fond of, was a Filipina. At a recent conference in Cebu, a Stanford official speaker and nurses in their hometowns were good barometers over American nurses. In fact, his friends all dated Pinay nurses and two of them ended up marrying them. It's that deadly TLC.

His assistant Buckingham from British Airways is the administrative and he spoke of developments that indicate the level of confidence of his government. For one thing, the British Embassy in Manila is constructing five stories on the three-story building. Second, about $20 million in British City (the several embassy to move from Makati to Taguig, the first being Singapore). The big British clothing chain, Marks & Spencer, will open a store in Cebu and branch in Boracay's Shangri-La, he said, the Philippines has been included among the 30 countries in Britain's Economic Investment Programme. The others are: China, India, Brazil, Russia, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria, South Africa, Nigeria, Mexico and Argentina). This one-year-old P30 million program in SE he said, has helped encourage greater transparency and better governance in government as well as improve the country's investment climate.

Political Tidbits

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

Among the projects are the improvement of public services delivery through "Citizen's Service Centers" in Pangasinan, Iloilo and Davao, Negros and Cagayan, enhancing an E-nachos for the SBN, developing an anti-corruption communications campaign, strengthening local governance, capacity-building on economic issues for the publicists, and technical assistance to the Energy Regulatory Commission. The envoy said this program will run these for two more years.

* * *

A few weeks back, I appealed for sponsors for the students of Iloilo National Vocational High School, where I serve pro bono as its PR. Lolly Teoh, founder of St. Peter Tire, gave free scholarships and training to 30 boys. Then Mayor Mabi Mabilo's poor, so that they can find employment right after graduation. Before Tata believes that only through education and training can the poor break the cycle of poverty. Among the technical courses offered by Teoh Tech are electrical, automotive, computer, carpentry, welding and baking. Each student specializes in a particular skill during his fourth year, followed by in-plant training. Teoh has graduated more than 700 students.

But each year the school, which survives entirely on private donations, is short of sponsors. This year there are still about 200 unsponsored students. Read readers looking for a worthy way to help the country should find an Iloilo Tech sponsorship most effective. Tuition for first year is P29,500 and for the second year, P23,000. For details, call Leah B. Ibarra, sponsorship coordinator, at 504-1806, 504-8606 or e-mail at ibarra@ilotech.edu.ph.

* * *

Last Saturday's report about the international conference on the life and work of the late Jesuit philosopher Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, to be held at the Ateneo University's Escolar Hall from Aug. 31-Sept. 3, drew many queries about the schedule of various speakers. Here it is:

Thursday, Aug. 31: 4:30 p.m. registration; 6:00-7:30 p.m. Opening Invocation by Bishop Honesto Ongtioco and Opening Remarks by Fr. Bienvenido Nebres, SJ; Keynote Address by Introduction by Fr. Georg Gasteiger, SVD, chair of International Teilhard Asia 2006, of the theme, "From the Heart of Despair to a Path to the Future."

Friday, Sept. 1: Creation Day: 8:30-10 a.m.—1st Main Address by Br. Ursula King, former chair of Theology and Religious Studies at the University of Bristol, UK, on "Teilhard's Significance for a Planetary, Ethical and Creative Spirituality"; 10:30-12:00 a.m.—2nd Main Address by physicist Fr. Kathleen Duffy, SSJ, president of Metanexus Institute for Science and Religion, on "Teilhard's Genesis: The Spiritual Poetry of Matter"; 2:30-4 p.m.—Address by Princeton University's Jennifer Morgan of her "Universe Story Trilogy" (Indeed by The Universe Story and The American Assessment for the Subconscious of Science); 4-5 p.m.—Launch of Morgan's third Trilogy book, "Illuminata: Who Dreams?"

Saturday, Sept. 2: 8:30-10 a.m.—2nd Main Address by Fr. Brian Swimme, C.S., former supervisor of Teilhard studies at the Fr. Edgar Morin Center, vice president of Caritas for Middle East and South Africa and author of over 30 books in 14 foreign languages, on "Teilhard between Science and Religion: A Science"; 10:30-12 noon—Open Forum; 12-1:30 p.m.—Lunch break; 1:30-4 p.m.—Panel discussion.

Sunday, Sept. 3: 8:30-10 a.m.—4th Main Address by Fr. Blasio Jose Francisco, S.J., president of the Loyola School of Theology on "Cosmos, the Third Parousia in the Ignatian-Religious Conversation: A Philippine Perspective."

Arvind Kejriwal's battle against corruption

Human Face

Ma. Cotter P. Dayo

HE TURNS AND SO SHOVE THE OPPOSITE OF that now-famous line that once aptly described a Filipino bureaucrat: he/she politicians: to young and to rest up.

Arvind Kejriwal of India is this year's Ramon Magsaysay Awardee for Emergent Leadership. Only 38 years old, Kejriwal has spent six years now fighting corruption that is so ingrained in India's bureaucracy. It has not been a desperate, useless battle though. His efforts have yielded results and benefited the people and the family whose concerns might not have merited the attention of the high-and-the-mighty.

I caught up with Kejriwal this other day during the launch-forum of IDE Asian Foundation's (IDEAF) book, "Ten Asian Activists Who Are Changing the Nature of Asia" (Anvil Publishing)—most have been for school literature. Kejriwal's humble man indeed speaks part of the inspiring stories in their books (for which I have written a number of stories). Kejriwal's humble man indeed speaks part of the inspiring stories in their books (for which I have written a number of stories). Kejriwal's humble man indeed speaks part of the inspiring stories in their books (for which I have written a number of stories).

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(IDEAF) annual awarding ceremonies will be held tonight at the Cultural Center of the Philippines. Ateneo Founding Dean Eugenio "Gene" Lopez III is the chairman of the foundation. (IDE stands for Institute of Developing Economies, Japan External Trade Organization Tokyo.)

Arvind finished engineering but landed in the Indian Revenue Service only on. It's most every, once's dream to work in the civil service, Kejriwal was not. He was in the service for eight years, mostly in Delhi, but saw little fulfillment, complaints: no bills and the like...career-smart money.

Frustration pushed and popularized in "Yaar's pay bribes!" campaign. It offered customers a hand by facilitating their dealings with the electricity department. In no time, thirteen was with 20,000 people who had their problems solved without a cent being handed over to their salaries.

Kejriwal explained that there are two types of bribery—the conventional and the mutual. The first is common in government offices where people have to go. Bribes are demanded by officials so you don't pay bribe money. The second happens between the bribe taker and the briber. Your tax duo could be housed in your favor if you give the various underling. Both profit from the deal.

This is why many people find it frustrating in activities and unsuccessful because in such it is always a challenge.

Because of what he learned started, the Delhi Right to Information Act of 2001 was soon passed. It gives citizens the right to access information of documents, follow up and demand to know what government agencies are doing or have done.

Kejriwal and Parivaran first put this law to use in the form of RTI applications concerning a public works project. For long after, residents did a "social audit" of 88 more projects. They held interviews and street plays, conducted public hearings and revealed their findings of misappropriation and embezzlement in 46 projects in the amount of 7 million rupees.

The residents of that area learned how to monitor projects block by block and to examine contracts before projects are started.

Another case involved wheat and rice ration

cards. Kejriwal's group found out that 40 percent of the poor—Parivaran discovered and exposed how 50 percent was being skimmed off by government officials in collusion with traders.

But boldness and alacrity on the part of the bribe-hunters had a price. One Parivaran member was brutally attacked. He luckily survived. (He is here with Kejriwal.) Some 5,000 residents staged protests and a "citizens ban" to demand a crackdown. The government acted.

Kejriwal pointed out that not everyone in the bureaucracy is corrupt. "Honesty may not get you the best post," he said. There is a chair from the bottom to the top, and the honest one who becomes a "block in the chain" could be relegated to the sidelines, beyond.

Kejriwal found the seeds they had started by helping people do "no bribe" transactions? So, they were worried about dependency. Kejriwal admitted, and they could not always be there to weed out problems.

Kejriwal's group did drop one to draft a citizen's "Right to Information" form that contained the citizens' rights as well as their demand to know the names of their complaint, request or transaction. It is a weapon, a strong way of saying to the officials concerned, "We know what you're doing."

Fifteen days months 200 people who used this method were able to get the service they needed.

Now on to seventh year, Parivaran has only 16 full-time members but it has trained 1,700 volunteers in 30 Delhi communities. Parivaran is the Kejriwal explains, is more of a movement rather than an institution. As such, it is not registered and operates without institutional funding. It gets its support from voluntary citizens who want to see it succeed. Its budget is only $150 a year.

Eco programs should not rely on foreign funding

LETTERS

THE ISSUE: COST OF THE ENQUIRER environmental lobby can be closed to the half-hearted concern of both government and people. Except for a few committed individuals and organizations, there is virtually no outcry of long-term proportions for environmental disasters. Hence, the impact of contemplated is getting worse, even unimaginable, from year to year.

Here, as in other matters of governance, the short sight of our national leaders hardly goes beyond their terms of office. Every administration treats environmental matters as a chronic nonfatal disorder, demanding attention only when it recurs.

The Philippine Agenda 21, a broad-driven program from the UNCED (UN Conference for Environment and Development), opinion Rio de Janeiro (1992) and adopted by the Philippines in 1996, provides a general framework for environmental protection and development, spearheaded by the Philippine Council for Sustainable Development, which is attached to the National Economic and Development Authority. Its 21 identifies some regions as heavily degraded and lays the groundwork for systematic environmental planning and implementation. Some local government units have turned out to be success only components but also outstanding in their participation.

The program, however, suffers from a weakness inherent in foreign-funded projects. Its sustainability shows hot and cold, depending on the availability of funds. Even participating NGOs also depend on foreign funding. Thus, while the program is planned to be durable, its implementation is not.

We cannot and should not rely on other countries to invest in our environment.

If President Macapagal-Arroyo can dish out a total of P2 billion more for the government's war on terrorism and insurrection, why can't she set aside P2 billion a year for environmental protection and development?

Here is her running start.

—ETTA R. TROCIDO,
chair,
Filipino Foundation for Sustainable Development,
Rm. 301 Encarnacion Condo,
143 13th Avenue,
Cubao, Quezon City

The Guimaras GMA saw but didn't feel

AFTER AN OVERNIGHT TRIP IN A resort in Guimaras, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo declared that oil spill off Guimaras is all beautiful, and this is true.

But the fact is, the whole of Guimaras was once beautiful. Unfortunately, government was asleep when a ship capsizes with an expired license ventured to sail a single-hulled tanker loaded with 2 million liters of oil. Authority had it committed to sleep for about two more weeks even after the news about the oil spill was all over print and broadcast media. If were up late to create a task force. When finally it was up and about, its President and her cabinet members couldn't succeed in to enjoy overnight beauty.

Here I visited somebody had and beaches of open one-gallon paint can filled with a peculiar unusual like looks of the President and her entourage while they were sleeping there, in their bathrooms, and dressing rooms in the dining room when they were taking their first cup of tea or coffee and their breakfast, and every hour they were, so that they could have at least 8th even just a little of what half of the Guimaras population is now going through because of the "Solar oil spill."

Here they have seen with their own eyes all the "blessings" that Petron and Standard Marketing Development Corp. (SMDC) have given to Guimaras? Sorry, I have gifted Guimaras with—oil, poisonous oil, delivered in families, abundance to thousands of families on the island, at no cost to them, even GUIlers.

Here I wished, GMA and her entourage, as well as the top executives of Petron and SMDC had, even just for a day gone through what every man, woman and child in the other half of Guimaras have been putting up with for more than two weeks now.

—LEDIA PINA,
ledpin4@yahoo.net

ConCom member opposing Cha-cha a distinguished UP Ateneo professor

AS RECENT AS A YEAR AGO, PERHAPS months ago, even weeks ago, the proposal for Charter change (Cha-cha) to extend the term of the sitting president a done deal. Now, opinions are mixed. There appears to be an increasing number of converts who at one time supported a change in the present form of government.

A few of those pushing for Cha-cha want it enacted in the future, not immediately. In fact, there appears to be an increasing number of Filipinos—according to recent Pulse Asia surveys—who do not see the need for Cha-cha now or at any other time in the future. Why a "fix" simply because more and more people are listening to the likes of our Boss Erap Estrada.

Ateneo is without question one of the most distinguished professors ever to have taught at the University of the Philippines and Ateneo. He teaches Strategic Management. He was also a dissenting minority member of the now defunct Constitutional Commission, Ateneo who became the presidential realists into vice chair of the ConCom committee on the form of government.

Ateneo is a scrupulous scholar and a vigorous voice for the "No to Parliament Movement." "When you get a choice, you may want to visit his website, http://www.ateneoforum.net

The NO TO PARLIAMENT Movement opposes the move to change the US-style presidential form of government to the Britain-style parliamentary form of government. It considers the move as a completely unprincipled and illogical response to the country's political and economic problems.

Reading a few of Ateneo's work and writings on the subject, one cannot help but be impressed that his approaches each legal, economic and political question without pre-judgment or "foolish agenda. He wants to get it right every time. Decades of academic immersion for his elegant lectures, his challenging Socratic dialogue. To uncontestable past students, Ateneo defined the excitement and intellectual challenge of the UP Business, Economics and Management classroom.

A superb teacher and scholar, Ateneo brought his mastery of complex and sophisticated material to the classroom, carefully leading his students through the most difficult areas of strategic planning, management and always challenging them to push themselves beyond their comfort levels to deepen understanding of the subject and mastery of the subject matter. This dominance manifested itself during sessions of the Consultative Commission.

Many of Ateneo's former students are now journalists, judges, lawyers, physicians, stockbrokers and even professors. The world is much better because of him.

—RENE ARTUZ,
Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

Veggies, not dogs enhance skin health

LET'S FACE IT: THE IDEA THAT EATING DOG meat is good for one's skin is a case of superstition gone awry and is a misuse of healing. ("Police women think dog meat good for skin," PDI, 8/22/06)

Eating veggies is the answer to having clear skin with a clear conscience. Studies have shown that eating vitamin-rich veggies like carrots, cucumbers, broccoli, celery, cabbage, green peppers, spinach and watercress every day enhances the skin's health, radiates acne and repairs damaged skin. Besides, there's nothing "sweet" about eating dog meat. The only difference between the dog you see and the dog you keep in the pen you treat them.

No dog deserves to be tortured or slaughtered in the same time you have a breakfast, forget a bowl of bandersnog—such into a salad instead. It will not only nourish your skin, but it will also nourish your soul, knowing that you're sparing "man's best friend" from unimaginable pain and suffering.

—ROSES ARTUZ,
People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) Asia-Pacific,
brenda@petaasiapacific.org

Bayanihan dance troupe: prestigious or spoiled?

THIS IS TO COMMEND THE INQUIRER FOR publishing, last Aug. 19, Christine Godinez-Ortega's news story on the Bayanihan dance troupe.

With that startling title, Ortega's report was a soothing criticism of the troupe's established manner of presenting indigenous dances. The numerous laurels (like beatification, canonization, artistic irresponsibility, lack of research, misrepresentation, slipshodness without knowing the basis or "basis" of specific dances, "tried" dance, etc.) are justified and sounded familiar to me.

I have said and written the same laments over and before my lecture to an SRO audience on the UP Diliman on April 28, 1977, at a special convocation during the 11st Foundation Anniversary celebration of the University of the East, Manila. We live then Sen. Helena Benitez was a special guest of honor. UE still to academic affairs, Dr. Alfonso Ilabo, the first president of the Mindanao State University, in that time, more was like a voice in the wilderness.

I have also written many times that any work in ethnomusicology, including ballroom, Filipino dances and action, outside the Mindanao (Mindanao, the Sulu Archipelago, Palawan) regions, I congratulate them for insisting on the need to protect the birthright of the cultural communities and indigenous peoples. Also, resources be created in comparison, as to assure use of movies in the repertoire of even the most prestigious or spoiled dance company in the Philippines.

—LEGACY FERNANDO-ARCEBAUDILLA,
artistic director,
Australian Dance Circle,
11 O'Neal St., Cubao, Quezon City

If you have any complaints, grievances or suggestions about the treatment of users and patients by the hospitals, you may write to the Philippine Hospital Watch, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue, corner Tapuz and Maceda streets, City of Makati or send a fax to fax 897-4783, 897-4796, or e-mail reader-relations@inquirer.com.ph.

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BCDA head orders probe of 'commission'

By Tarra Quismundo
Inquirer Central Luzon

BASES CONVERSION DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY president Narciso Abaya said his agency would investigate claims of Central Luzon contractors that they paid between P1 million and P5 million to a BCDA official in exchange for non-existent subcontracts in the P21 billion Subic-Clark-Tarlac expressway project (SCTEP).

Abaya, in a statement on Wednesday, urged contractors belonging to the Concerned Civil Subcontractors (CCSC) to file formal complaints against the BCDA official, who was identified as BCDA Director Sesi Cruz.

"We will open up to investigate the allegations if the complainants will come forward and execute sworn statements. This is the only way to determine who has, indeed, been done irregularities in connection with the project," he said.

Abaya said he would gather representatives of the National Contractors Association of the Philippines, the Philippine Contractors Association and the Japanese consultants in charge of the project's civil works in a meeting "to find out the truth."

'Let the axe fall'

"We will let the axe fall where it should," he said.

Abaya said he had heard similar reports in the past but he could not make any independent verification since there were no formal complaints filed.

Sources in the construction industry said a former BCDA official identified the official allegedly involved in the anomaly as Cruz.

Cruz, in a text message he sent the Inquirer on Wednesday, said he has the right to confront his accusers.

"I am not surprised there are complainants because in my work, when I please one, I displease so many," he said.

"My conscience is clear. But I just hope reason and fairness will prevail," he added.

Cruz earlier denied the charges, saying his accusers were trying to malign him and wanted him out of BCDA.

Abaya assured all concerned of "full transparency in any investigation."

"However, we must avoid unwholesome and abusive due process," he said.

Flagship project

"We have endeavored hard to keep the SCTEP above board because this is a very important flagship project of the government, and we are still on track to finish the project by the end of 2007," Abaya said.

He said BCDA would endorse to the proper courts the findings of any irregularity, noting that BCDA "will never tolerate illegal activities."

In his statement, Abaya said he has "toured the Luzon area on the project site" since BCDA personnel who have similar fears accused of wrongdoings relative to irregularities were ongoing."

A Palace source, privy to the payment of what has come to be known among contractors as "shortfall fee," said one of those officials was Bienvenido Tolentino, who was "next in the hierarchy."

President Macapagal-Arroyo has identified the SCTEP as one of her administration's flagship projects.

It runs from Subic in Zambales to Clark in Pampanga and includes land travel time between the two former US military bases.

It was also seen as catalyst for the growth of Central Luzon with a major seaport found in Subic and an airport big enough for the latest aircraft in Clark.

Farmers vow not to drop fight for coco levy

LUCENA CITY—THE 9000 farming illiterate up ngo Sentrong Magsasaka (Pakisama), a nationwide organization of coconut farmers, vowed to continue the long and hard struggle to reclaim the multibillion-peso coconut levy fund and registered vehement opposition to the government's proposed compromise agreement to settle the issue.

"Pakisama's struggle has already reached more than two decades, all the more that—no matter how the coconut workers will fall down to nothing and will be reared if the coco levy funds will be recuperated by the government," Rene Gerilla, Pakisama president, said in an interview here.

Gerilla added that most of the old coconut farmers in the levy are now sick and dying and "still no assistance in sight."

"But we will keep the flame of struggle burning," he said.

Camilo Sabio, Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG) chair, has been pushing to start negotiations with the camp of businessman Eduardo Cojuangco on a possible compromise deal to settle the 18-year-old coconut levy dispute.

To be covered by the compromise negotiation is the sequestered 27 percent San Miguel Corp. shares that were supposedly originally purchased through the coconut levy funds.

"We are strongly against the pro-cronyist compromise deal being worked out by the PCGG and Danding's camp as a means to recovering the country's funds. We strongly demand the issuance of Supreme Court and Sandiganbayan decisions for the release of coconut levies and for the development of the coconut industry," Gerilla said.

On Dec. 14, 2001, the Supreme Court ruled that the coconut levy funds were public funds but left it to the Sandiganbayan to decide who owns the assets acquired with the funds.

Sandiganbayan, in resolutions issued in May 2004, also held that the 27-percent shareholding in the SMC, originally acquired through the coconut levy funds, was owned by coconut farmers. It held primarily the government for the benefit of the farmers and the national industry. Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon

6 drown in flooding in Cebu City village

By Doreen Hapalmac
Inquirer Visayas

CEBU CITY—SIX PERSONS, including a woman and her three children, died yesterday after their house was lifted with floodwater following the collapse of their house's wall in Sinsilyan, Mabolo, Cebu City.

The fatalities were identified as Priscilla Bulagan, 35, a part-time teacher and a resident of Sitio Sinsilyan; her 7-year-old son Alfredo III; her two daughters, Perlla Jane, 7 and Fritzie Joyce, 6; Abigail Bulalan, 24, who is the sister of Priscilla's husband; and their helper, identified as Elsa Gesolo, of San Isidro, Leyte.

Priscilla's husband, Alfredo Jr., who hails from Novaliches, Quezon City, was in Tagbilaran City, Bohol when the tragedy occurred.

In an interview, he said he went to Tagbilaran as an agent of Cebu-based Asia Pacific Tuna.

Alfredo Jr. managed seminoles Reynaldo Ompoy said the victims were sleeping at the ground floor of the house they were renting when the flood in Brgy. 6 in that barangay hall in Brgy. 9, to inform them a flash flood had destroyed the concrete fence of a house near the river and reportedly owned by a woman Dalmas Dedoldon.

The floodwaters also destroyed a concrete fence, which separated the house of Dedoldon and the one occupied by the Bulagan family.

Bulagan said the concrete fence fell on the main door of the house, and then water filled the ground floor occupied by the family.

While the count of death still has to be determined, Alfredo Jr. said he believed that the death toll could have been higher.

Sgt. Ompoy said the relatives, who were all among their kinds when their bodies were found, could not have evacuated, according to Ompoy.

Mayor Tomas Osmeña immediately ordered the area to find out if someone should be blamed for the tragedy.

Councilor Gerardo Carillo, chair of the committee on social services, said there must be an investigation to find out if the house beside the river was constructed legally.

Carillo also said the city government will extend financial assistance of P15,000 per victim.

Burial assistance will be given to Dedoldon while that of Gesolo will be brought to her hometown San Isidro, Leyte.

GOING BANANAS
President Macapagal-Arroyo appears sure to be chomp to what food or not as she carefully picks a banana during a visit to Quezon to personally see the extent of the oil spill that wreaked havoc on the province's marine resources.

Baguio mayor leaves city hall; vice mayor takes over

BAGUIO CITY—THE DEPARTment of Interior and Local Government enforced the standing suspension of Mayor Braulio Fernando, Wednesday, and installed Vice Mayor Reinaldo Bautista Jr. as its acting capacity.

Fernando said he would ask the Court of Appeals to review the Malacañang decision, which he described as "unfair."

He also said he will continue discharging his duties despite the suspension.

The 70-year-old Fernando had refused to relinquish his city hall seat even when Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita first issued his suspension until he could appeal his case. Malacañang dismissed his appeal.

On Monday, Fernando had expressed his desire to step down when he broke them goodbye.

The Executive of the city's leadership has opened another legal door after Bautista asked the mayor's palatial appointees and aides to file their resignations to pave the way for him to install his own set of appointees.

But Jose Edward, chief of the city personnel office, said the local Government Code does not mention vacancies.

Edward said the code specifies the appointive powers granted to any official who succeeds temporarily or permanently.

While Fernando was not reinstated from office, Bautista said the suspension would end in June 2007, which is the end of the mayor's term.

Bautista said this is the reason some city officials believe city administrator Bete Flamia and Fernando's close aides like his secretary, Consuelo Bueno, have to resign from their posts.

Bautista added Flamia and Fernando's staff members to wait for 30 days before they resign. That is the period appointed to them by the Local Government Code in cases when a mayor is incapacitated, and more relinquish his post than his successor.

"What if the court grants us its decision? Does that mean Fernando comes back with his appointees and the loser is driven out? Of course not. Let them rest," Bautista said.

Deputies Director, BLG Cordillera director, said Bautista's petition before the CA could still determine the status of his appointees especially those who were confirmed by the city council.

Bautista said with Fernando's personal staff, including his secretary, would have to resign because they don't want the mayor's confidential communications.

Tharon Cabreros and Donna Arnaville, Inquirer Northern Luzon

Tension grips town as mayor defies suspension

STA. ROSA CITY—POLITICAL tension is gripping this city after Sta. Rosa Mayor Joey Catindig slammed Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno's decision to suspend him for a year and warned that he was still the "legitimate mayor" of the city.

In an interview at his office yesterday, Catindig briefly reporters that he was leaving his office because Puno's decision to suspend him was just "inconsequential to return."

He said Puno's verdict was "unfair to a city mayor who surely wrote dynamic and efficient city department heads to assist him in extending effective service to his constituents."

"I think Secretary Puno erred when he said I am suspended because the ruling says not to final and executory. I have already suspended my case to the Office of the President," Catindig told the business.

He said he has yet to receive a copy of the ruling of the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) on the separate cases filed against him by city government officer Rolando Cervania and city accountant Nelia Carvajal.

Puno suspended Catindig for six months on each case after the DILG found him guilty of the violation of the Constitution, abuse of authority, oppression and grave misconduct.

The cases stemmed from Catindig's decision to remove Cervania and Carvajal from their posts last year.

Both were closely identified with Catindig's political rival, Vice Mayor Arlene Arcillas-Bautista, daughter of slain Mayor Leon Arcillas.

A day after Puno's pronouncement of Catindig's suspension, followers of Bautista staged demonstrations and announced that the vice mayor is the new mayor of Sta. Rosa.

Catindig said the incident only proved that his impending suspension was "politically motivated to discredit me." Marlon Ramos, Inquirer Southern Luzon

N. Ecija town holds 'hugas-kalawang' fest

TALAVERA, NUEVA ECIJA—Farmers and rice planters here went on a wage cut Tuesday in a day-long "Hugas-Kalawang festival" that revived an ancient fragrance tradition in farming communities in Nueva Ecija.

"This tradition must not be forgotten. It is a way of giving thanks to our ancestors for the fortune who prepare the field and the planters who plant the rice," Mayor Nestor Salonga said.

Salonga said tradition must be forgotten to these important aspects of the culture. He said he would be sure that would heed the notice.

"Hugas-Kalawang," he said, means "washing off of the rust" from farming tools and gunwood of farmers and rice planters.

"This is a tradition in Nueva Ecija which is more than a tradition. It is an opportunity to be at the first phase of rice planting is now started," said Mayor Wo-Ting, the festival could be sustainable clash.

"Sustainable in a farming community, you have to

MILF demands release of 3 suspected terrorists

ELCHIN KEYMORT, MAGUINDANAO—The Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) yesterday demanded the release of the three suspected terrorists who were arrested on Sunday while trying to board a ship for Manila.

Mohaqher Iqbal, MILF chief negotiator, said the arrest of the suspects—one of them a regular MILF member—was illegal.

"It is part of the military and police propaganda," he said.

Iqbal said the military and the police have issued statements that have dragged the MILF into the supposed terror plot hatched by the detained Jehanjeah.

The plot was supposed to be part of attacks that would culminate on Sept. 11, the day when terrorists struck in the United States.

Frame-up

"Jun al-Ding, chair of the MILF's ceasefire committee, said Sammy Gumpong and the two other suspects, who were civilians, have been framed up.

"We have witnesses who can testify that the three men were framed up by the military and the police," Al Haqqani.

Lt. Col. Julius Ando, spokesperson for the military's 6th Infantry Division, said Gumpong, Razak Macarambong and Mehdi Sandigan, all of Mamasing, Maguindanao, were arrested as they were boarding the Superferry vessel for Manila around 2 p.m. on Sunday.

He said the three yielded explosives when frisked.

But Al-Ding said the bombs that Ando alleged were seized from the three men were planted. He said because of this, the MILF has lodged a protest before the peace panels.

Chief Supt. Joel Goltiao, Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao police chief, welcomed the MILF's action but denied the suspects were framed up.

Bomb parts

"They were not framed up. Actually, when they entered the fix-polluting, there were bomb components found in their bags," Goltiao said. He did not say what the components were.

Goltiao said that during interrogation, the three suspects, who are all MILF members, admitted they were paid to carry out fresh attacks in Manila.

Jesus Dureza, presidential peace adviser, told the Inquirer by phone that the release of the suspects would depend on the final report of the ceasefire committee.

"Let's leave that to members of government ceasefire committee which is looking into their demand. The rebels will deposition

Villagers told: Don't give 'butanding' stress

LEGAZPI CITY—THE MAYOR OF this city asked residents of a village here to keep whale sharks existing by "not giving them food."

"We can enjoy the sightings of 'butanding' or whale sharks but avoid giving them extra," Mayor Noel Rosal told villagers at Barangay Bigaa, which has been frequented by the giants creatures for more than a week now.

To orient villagers on how to deal with the whale sharks, Rosal invited Jo Bara, a science research specialist of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, and Allan Amarine, 38, a butanding interaction officer (BIO) from Donsol, Sorsogon.

In an assembly Tuesday at the Bantay Dagat hall that faces the shore, Rosal called on about 50 village's, mostly fishermen, about the nature of the butanding.

"I need your cooperation to taking care of this creature so it would stay in our seas," Rosal said.

Butandings come close to shore in Bigaa, then in Donsol where tourists have to hire boats to get closer looks at the whale sharks.

Rosal asked villagers to keep their surroundings clean and avoid throwing garbage into the sea.

He said boats should also be kept clean because this was where plankton, the butandings' food, come from.

Boys and butandings come when the waters are calm.

Nicente Alquiza, 64, a village councilor said the butandings come on the shore because of the food.

"Only when these creatures sneeze or wonder in the seas do neighboring barangays get to see them," he said.

Dinas Bajaoelevates, 35, a jobseeker (JO) in Donsol, is enthusiastic about the prospect of the butandings making their presence felt in Rosal's coastal waters on a year-round basis. *Joanna Gea Rubio, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

A WHALE shark swims off the waters of Legazpi City.

Aurora mayor defies suspension order

By Tonette Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—FOR almost a month now, Mayor Bienvenido Angeles of Dinalungan, Aurora, has continued to defy a 60-day preventive suspension over a road user's fee ordinance.

The unnamed ranged inside the office he what she called a fight for the rule of law and convenience.

"Hindi ako (homebody—I have not stepped down)," Marquez told the boosters in a phone interview on Tuesday.

She said the decision of the provincial board and Gov. Bel. Ladlad Angara-Castillo to suspend her and Vice Mayor Virgie Ballesteros following the filing of an administrative complaint by the Industries Development Corp. (IDC), a logging firm, was "very erroneous."

For one, she said, Resolution No. 72, which recommended the suspension solely on referring Ordinance No. 2009-017 which is about coastal resources management. The local fee on road users for is contained in Ordinance No. 2004-019, she said.

The board, she said, should not find fault in her and Vallejo for not furnishing a copy of the ordinance. That, she said, was the job of the town council's secretary.

She said the settlement should also have been questioned by the IDC in court, not before the board.

Michael Ong, IDC vice president, said the company filed a criminal case against Marquez in the Office of the Ombudsman.

"We haven't ranked it took three-and-a-half days (to decide)," Marquez said.

She said the "pre-requisite of having a strong evidence of guilt has not been met because the board did not study the case well."

Marquez and Vallejo filed a motion to dismiss Resolution No. 72 on Aug. 7, saying the Ombudsman had jurisdiction of the case because that was where it was filed first on May 9.

Marquez said the ordinance covered only a municipal road and the local government has authority to collect charges to maintain that public infrastructure.

"Every week, five to eight trucks of IDC loaded with timber pass through that road. We're talking of charging P300 for every loaded truck and every collection is duly covered by receipts. We have collected P50,000. We plan to use the money to buy a land to expand a narrow road that is accident prone," she said.

The bottom line, according to Marquez, was the IDC was getting back at her for her anti-logging and anti-hunting campaigns.

"I am supported by the people," she said.

Roundup

ARMM teachers get pay

COTABATO CITY—The Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao has started distributing the salaries of close to 19,000 public school teachers amounting to over P130 million, which represents the unpaid salaries of "provisional and permanent teachers in the secondary and elementary levels" for September, 2008. Education Secretary Oscar Sarmiento disowned the overpayment of salaries to non-ARMM administrations. He said Gov. Zaldy Ampatuan had ordered for the funds and had ordered regional officials to make sure that the problem would not be repeated. *Gladys C. Ramos, Inquirer Mindanao*

1 dead in Davao floods

DAVAO CITY—A person drowned while 24 houses were damaged after floodwaters submerged at least six villages in Sta. Cruz, Davao del Sur, following heavy rains on Saturday. The Davao City Disaster Coordinating Council (MDCC) identified the fatality as Jimmy Langaton. It said debris brought by torrents had clogged creeks and rivers. Provincial information chief Marivic Cuhar said food assistance had been extended to about 700 affected families. The local social welfare and development office had already requested the areas to determine the extent of damage. Gov. Benjamin Bautista Jr. ordered the provincial police office to deploy its search, rescue and retrieval team to the areas to provide emergency equipment to assist the local government in clearing creeks and rivers. *Edith V. Aguirre, Inquirer Mindanao*

Free calls for Albay folk

LEGAZPI CITY—Retired Police Director General Avelaro C. Lumibao has donated 2,000 free calling cards to the Provincial Disaster Coordinating Council office in Old Albay District here for the use of residents who have relatives abroad. A project of the Rotary Club of Daraga City, of which Lumibao is the president, the calling stations allows the residents to contact their relatives for free, especially at this time of Mayon volcano's abnormal behavior. Lumibao said there are 17 countries in all, including Australia, England, Kuwait, Germany, Israel, Norway, Russia, South Korea, Spain, Taiwan, the Vatican City and Wales. Mobile phone calls are also available for Canada, China, Hong Kong, Singapore and the United States. *Ayla ann Aguila, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

DENR workers hurt in mishap

SAN FRANCISCO, Agusan del Sur—Six workers of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources suffered injuries when their vehicle carried a load of fire 116 Batangas Loma here, after they monitored the implementation of the Green Philippine Highways project on Friday. Police said among the victims were Engineer Ferdinand Ramos, administrative officer of the community environment and natural resources office in Surigao City; Engineer Lymalyn Quiapo environment director; and Environmental Secretary Angelo Reyes had directed him to attend to the needs of the injured personnel. *Chris V. Panganiban, Inquirer Mindanao*

Getting ready for oil spill

ARMIRAS CITY—At the order of the MT Solar 1 oil spill in Guimaras, Iloilo, and the MV Silly Star sulfuric acid spills in Basan town, Batangas, the provincial government has recommended to the Batangas Bay Regional Coordinating Committee (Batcoc) to adopt an existing integrated contingency response and disaster and environmental protection fund fund to ensure the protection of Batangas' coastal waters. The fund will protect shore-coastal waters at spills in nearby canals, Lemery Basin, Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration meteorologist. Armirasi fire need to treat oil spills immediately before such calamities occur. Batcoc recognized the need for the government officials in the areas of responding another conditions of the oil spill. *Rhoda Alexandra Lumbo, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

DENR to stop fish cage operations in Subic

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—THE operations of at least five fish cages built within 22 hectares of the reserved waters in Subic, Zambales, will be stopped this week, the chief of the Environmental Management Bureau said.

Lormelyn Claudio, EMB director in Central Luzon, said the five cages violated the ban on construction of unregulated multilayer (UCG).

The status of six other operators will be decided by the outcome of coordination with the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, she said.

The 11 operators nominated 171 fish cages in the waters of Isla Sigayan-eh in Barangay Cawag. Six of the operators have obtained only municipal registrations, or permits, from the barangay or mayor since 2004. The rest have operated without local permits, an EMB document showed.

"Our legal division has per-

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pared the cease-and-desist orders as witnessed by the multi-partite monitoring team (MMT), the Subic Bay Resort Association (Subex) and Zambales Hon Gov. Ramon Lorbeta and as verified by our field staff," Claudio said.

In June, the Sanalakang Plangkatan sa Pangisdaan (Sapangi) blamed coal-laden boats from fish cages as the cause of 500-ft-thick that averaged 100 kg of fungus (milfish) daily in the last week of that month.

The EMB's investigation of the proliferation of the fish cages in Subic began in July 2008 on the heels of a complaint by Carlos Balangue to their Environment Secretary Michael Defensor.

As early as then, EMB Investigator Estrella Tribal stated the lack of EOCs and permit from the BFAR. Payment of fines and issuance of notice of violations were recommended. *Cleta Rosario Ordoñez, Inquirer Central Luzon*

6 Inquirer correspondents elected to NUJP board

By Lei Biondi

SIX INQUIRER CORRESPONDENTS were among 15 members elected to the directorate of the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines (NUJP) during its 5th Congress held in Tagaytay City Sunday and Monday.

Ernest Alimosa, Inquirer's Cagayan de Oro correspondent; Bonne Burgos, Jr. Iloilo correspondent; Amihan Joaquin, Olongapo; Bobby Caballero, Sorsogon; Nona Lubrino, Iloilo; and Jonathan Tiamzon, Laguna, were elected by national council members composed of 27 voting delegates from 27 chapters all over the country.

Elected chair was Jose Torres Jr. of GMANetwork. Vice chair is Tonyo Fernandez of MBC-5; secretary general is Rowena Paraan, coordinator of the International Federation of Journalists-NUJP office, according to a news release.

Deputy secretary general is Jaime Tajinia of DYZT-AM, treasurer is Berlinio Sebolinia, the Philippine Star and NUJP-Central Luzon City, and Maureen Aquino, Business Times and NU-JP-Bicolano.

The NUJP, which has been campaigning for press freedom and the safety of journalists, was asked by congress delegates to look into the possibility of negotiating a better compensation package for correspondents and strippers of national news outlets.

It will also lobby with Congress for the passage of a freedom of information act to ensure journalists' access to government documents "vital to the practice of their profession and to pursuit of the public interest," the newspaper said.

The delegates also took up issues concerning the relations between reporters and their sources, and the scrapping of proposed measures that threaten freedom of the press and of expression, most notably the anti-terror law bill.

The NUJP will also work to establish an awards system honoring journalists for ethical practice and convince news outlets to observe the principle of presumption of innocence by stopping the practice of publicly presenting suspects until a case is properly filed in court.

MEMBERS of the NUJP discuss ways to improve their situation during workshops held at the organization's 5th Congress in Tagaytay City.

INQUIRER Southern Luzon
Editor Joel Navallasca
Bureau Chief Ronaldo G. Salamangue

DARAGANG MAGAYON

Woman victim or warrior?

By Ephraim Aguilar
Legazpi City

BEHIND MT. MAYON, RISING 2,462 meters above Bicol, is a legend telling people that in the core of this magnificent and world-famous volcano, which has been restless since 1999, is the heart of a woman longing to be free.

Mayon was derived from the Bicol word mayon, which means "beautiful," and was used to name one of the most active volcanoes in the country and one of the natural wonders of the world for its near perfect cone shape.

According to folklore, Daragang Magayon (Beautiful Maiden), the only daughter of chief Datu Makusog (Strong), grew up to be an beautiful and lovely that most Bicolano tribes vied for her affection.

But she was indifferent to all her suitors. Not even Ulap Pagtuga (Unrefined), a powerful chief and great hunter, could win her heart even if he showered her tribe with gifts.

One day Ulap (Cloud) came after a long walk to see for himself the celebrated beauty of the maiden. Unlike other suitors, Ulap waited patiently until Daragang Magayon became shy.

Sensing that his daughter was in love, Makusog did not object to the betrothal and ordered his people to prepare a wedding feast.

The news enraged Pagtuga, who abducted Makusog and once more for Magayon that unless she married him, her beloved father would die and that war would be waged against her tribe.

Magayon could not do anything but give in to Pagtuga's demand.

Informed about the unhappy turn of events, Ulap, along with his warriors, arrived in time for the wedding fete and killed Pagtuga.

This was not the valet's happy ending, though. As Magayon rushed to embrace Ulap, she was hit by an arrow and fell to Ulap's arms. A follower of Pagtuga hurled a spear at Ulap's back, killing him instantly.

The magic leaves never lasted in one place which, as time passed, was transformed into a hill shedding, quake and huge boulders sprouted from the top of what is now Mt. Mayon.

Dr. Juliet Bonto, a literature professor and an alumni dean at the Bicol University College of Arts and Letters, said folklegends were created by native tribes to explain phenomena around them.

The story of Daragang Magayon has different versions, but in each of them, she always died....from an arrow aimed at her or her lover.

According to Bonto, the story portrays how women were treated in ancient times—like those of the lower class—their lives determined by men around them and without freedom to speak for themselves.

In the early 1990s, a significant twist in the myth arose after literature poet Merlinda Bobis redefined the character of Daragang Magayon, from being a victim to a woman who bravely battled against oppression. She was transformed into a woman warrior.

Bobis has received various prestigious awards, such as the Don Carlos Palanca Memorial Awards for Literature in 1987 and 1989, and the Gawad Cultural Center of the Philippines for Literature in 1990.

In her graduate thesis that analyzed Bobis' epic "Lagalag at Ibe Nitong Mutya: Daragang Magayon," Bonto stated that in the early part of the narrative, Magayon was presented as well timed, pampered and adored by people around her.

She was a typical girl who feared blood, was weak and vulnerable. She suffered rejection just like any other people in the tribe but also by her own father.

"The elders in their tribe, who took advantage of the weakness of her aging father Makusog, planned that Magayon be forced to marry Pagtuga in order to establish political alliance on behalf of the tribe. When Magayon learned of that, she decided to transform herself into a warrior to the delight of the father who calling, "Indeed you are of my own blood," " Bonto said.

Unlike in the traditional legend where Magayon decided to marry Pagtuga in exchange for the freedom of her father, in Bobis' version, she asked for guidance from the goddess Magmamalay.

"The response to the tribe did not want Magayon to marry Pagtuga because they thought he was an enemy, a symbol of oppression against women during their time. When Magayon inquired from Magmamalay, she answered her question with another question "Handa ka ba sa inyong nakatakda sa inyong Diyos at sa mga nagsasabi sa inyong Diyos at sa mga nagsasabi sa inyong Diyos?" (Are you ready for what is destined for you by your God and by those who speak for your God?), Bonto said.

"What Magayon is trying to portray in her character redefined by Bobis is that, "I am not just beautiful. I am not just a weak and typical princess but I am more than that," she added.

The maiden decided to fight for her father's freedom as well as her freedom to love. She was no longer a victim who depended on her tribesman and Ulap to be rescued.

"At the end of the epic though, it was implied that both Magayon and Ulap died in the battle. But Magayon here died in a new manhood among gle. She was fighting till the end," said Bonto.

Mayon Volcano has been on a "mild and spell" eruption for more than a month now, keeping nearly 40,000 villagers confined in government evacuation centers away from its shadow.

Assessing the behavior of Mayon now, Bonto remembered what Bobis said: "Ibat Ibat Daragang Magayon, she appears to be gloriously beautiful, calm, and placid but when you look closely, you will have intimacy of an she should about her restless struggle."

TO ALL STOCKHOLDERS OF EQUITABLE PCI BANK, INC.:

Please be advised that the Stockholders' Convention in connection with Equitable PCI Bank, Inc. (formerly Equitable Banking Corporation) ("Equitable PCI Bank") will have a Tender Offer Period (a 20 Trade Day period) and Exchange Period (a 10 Trading Day period) during which the Philippine Stock Exchange (the "PSE") declared to Section 19 of the Securities Regulation Code of the Philippines ("SRC") in connection with its conversion or merger of the stockholders' outstanding Common Stock (the "Shares") of Equitable PCI Bank, Inc. ("EPCIB").

The Bidder has commenced a negotiated sale with Bidder and Offeree Stockholders to voluntarily tender for EPCIB Shares at a price of P [illegible] per Share or a total consideration of P [illegible] which shall be purchased under the terms of the Tender Offer. Additionally the Bidder, to effectively and validly purchase [illegible] of the Shares. Consequently, the subject of this Tender Offer is [illegible] Shares, representing [illegible] of the Shares.

The offer provides the acquisition of the Shares at P [illegible] per Share in a cash consideration of P [illegible] which will be [illegible] Bidder's [illegible] in accordance with the terms of the Tender Offer. The consideration will be paid to the Offeree Stockholders [illegible] Offeree Stockholders [illegible] Tender Offer Period.

The Bidder shall acquire any Shares that may be tendered by any Stockholder [illegible] in response to the Tender Offer Period. The Tender Offer commences on August 31, 2006 at 9:00 a.m. and will end on September 28, 2006 at 5:00 p.m. (the "Tender Offer Period"). The Tender Offer Period may be extended for the Bidder subject to prior approval of the Commission. The Shares to be tendered are identified below, issued at the PSE on October 2, 2006. The "Tender Date"). Stockholders must take no further action.

Stockholders who wish to offer all or a portion of their Shares for sale to the Bidder may do so by executing an Application to Tender Shares Form. The Applications Form(s) must be submitted, duly accomplished, together with the [illegible] requirements to the Transaction Center, EPCI Securities Corporation at 11th Floor, The Equitable PCI Bank Tower 1, 6776 Ayala Avenue corner V.A. Rufino Street, Makati City, Philippines.

The Transaction Center reserves the right to accept the tendered Shares in whole or in part, without documentary for purposes of ascertaining the validity, eligibility and acceptability of the Shares being tendered for the purchase pursuant to the Offer.

The Shares being tendered for sale to the Bidder must be received by the Tender Offer Agent in accordance with the terms of the Offer. Any Shares not received by the Tender Offer Agent on or before September 28, 2006 (Tender Offer Period) shall be rejected by the Bidder.

Any Shares tendered may be withdrawn by the stockholder of its [illegible] any time during the Tender Offer period by submitting a written request for the tendered Shares to the Tender Offer Agent and surrendering the original [illegible] or receipt issued by the Tender Offer Agent/Broker/Custodian. The fact that no withdraw [illegible] Shares shall be on Thursday, September 28, 2006 at 12 noon.

Any Shares shall be deemed accepted for the Shares for payment on September 28, 2006 at 5:00 noon (the "Closing Date") subject to the condition that the Bidder shall have obtained all necessary [illegible] and [illegible] and [illegible] approvals, consents and [illegible] from the government by the Bidder or its shares.

Stockholders are advised to read the Application Form, the Terms of the Tender Offer and the SEC Form 19-1 and Annex 19-1 filed by the Commission of the EPCIB Tax of Charge, Records Following:

EPCI Securities Corp.
[illegible]
The SEC Corporate Center
No. 27 SEC Avenue
Ortigas Center, Pasig City

Attention:
Jacqueline Ong
Tel No. 637-8708

Attention:
Jacqueline Ong
Tel No. 637-1645

EPCI Capital Investment Corp.
[illegible]
The SEC Corporate Center
No. 27 SEC Avenue
Ortigas Center, Pasig City

Attention:
Francisco Eduardo A. Jamerson
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Aplus METRO

Chief Enver G. Dipasupil

A SOLDIER gets ready to give residents (right) of Western Bicutan, Taguig, a scent of their own medicine while another soldier behind him struggles to keep a water hose trained on the evasive denizens.

9 persons hurt in Taguig demolition

By Jocelyn R. Uy

FISTICUFFS AND STONES RAINED on Sitio Masagana in Barangay Western Bicutan, Taguig City yesterday as a demolition team tried to tear down about 300 houses in the area.

Nine people were hurt in the incident. Five of them residents while the rest were riot police, manning the latter to retaliate by spraying them with water from a fire truck. It happened while the officials were trying to strike the house through a sledgehammer, Taguig police chief, Supt. Alfred Corpus, told the Inquirer.

After several hours of negotiations between residents and Mayor Freddie Tinga, Vice Mayor George Elias, Col. Dante Perfas, commander of Task Force Bantay, Presidential Commission for Urban Poor Secretary Percival Cendaña and Senator Rodolfo Biazon, the demolition was postponed to Wednesday next week.

Tinga, meanwhile, formed a committee to be led by Cheryl to discuss relocation plans for qualified families.

Corpus said houses in Sitio Masagana had to be torn down because "the area is still part of the Libingan ng mga Bayani."

Bernard Vergara, manager of the Fort Bonifacio Satellite Government Center Area, added that the houses were "in the flight path, posing as a danger to civil aviation."

Plans bound for the Villamor Airbase International Airport are usually flyovers area.

Army officials had earlier said that a shoulder-mounted rocket launcher or a sniper rifle fired from Sitio Masagana could bring any passing aircraft down.

According to Vergara, the area was not covered by any proclamation and therefore could not be awarded to informal settlers.

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BPI FAMILY SAVINGS BANK

Drive your Dream

Battle of the billboard heats up

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

IMUS, CAVITE, BALANGAY (Wed) Week (yesterday) hastily asked the Mandaluyong City Hall to recall the permit it had issued for the construction of an 80-foot billboard on Edsa.

If their demand is ignored, they said they would take the matter to the courts.

Balangay officials have been opposing the ongoing construction of a giant billboard on Edsa, sent in a submission of the Manila billboard Company.

The barangay had refused to issue a clearance for the project several times only to find out last week that a permit had been issued by City Hall two months ago.

On Tuesday, barangay officials passed a resolution in which they vowed to "take appropriate legal actions to nullify the billboard permit issued by the Mandaluyong City Hall."

The same resolution also sought to nullify to cancel or order issued by Mayor Neptali Gonzales, allowing City Hall to grant permits to businessmen whose applications in the barangay had been rejected or denied.

In refusing to allow the construction of the billboard, barangay officials cited a local ordinance which limits the sizes and numbers of billboards.

Angelito Jay Guanzon, Gonzales told the business he was confident that City Hall, in granting a permit, followed local ordinances and the National Building Code.

But in three letters to Gonzales and to City Building Official Gonzalo Antonio, Wack-Wack thus Marcos Rizon and the executive order was "contrary to law."

He demanded in his letter that Gonzales recall the permit issued for the billboard, as well as the subsequent orders "effective" three days, "otherwise the barangay shall take appropriate legal action."

Refusing to be named, an official from City Hall said the issuance of the executive order was prompted by complaints from businessmen against the barangay council.

The ordinance against billboards, for instance, had long been frowned upon by some businessmen in the city because its provisions are far more stringent than those of the city government or even national laws governing billboards, the official added.

The barangay ordinance had been approved by the Mandaluyong City Council.

Barangay Kapitan Ariel Tabacmonda, meanwhile, acknowledged that while there may be complaints that the barangay ordinance was too strict, "there are more people complaining that there are already too many billboards, especially along Edsa."

Barangay Wack-Wack has jurisdiction over the stretch of Edsa from the corner of Ortigas Road to Shaw Boulevard, as well as parts of the Ortigas Center and several pub villages.

MetroBriefs

Stay try failed

MUNTINLUPA (Wed) — The Commission on Audit assigned to disallow some P2.5 million in questionable expenses by the city council to disallow P2.5 million in questionable expenses by the City Hall of Muntinlupa, mayor Jaime Fresnedi, chairman of the Muntinlupa City Hall, was ordered by the court to refund a Tuesday ruling without explanation. Fresnedi, who is also Board Chairman, also ordered the refund. The city council's decision was in the latter. Fresnedi's political ally, Senator Ramon Magsaysay, Jr., was also ordered to refund the money. The city council's decision was in the latter. Fresnedi's political ally, Senator Ramon Magsaysay, Jr., was also ordered to refund the money. The city council's decision was in the latter. Fresnedi's political ally, Senator Ramon Magsaysay, Jr., was also ordered to refund the money.

Fugitive arrested

ANTIPOLO (Wed) — A fugitive, who was wanted for the killing of two people, was arrested by the police in Antipolo City. The fugitive, who was wanted for the killing of two people, was arrested by the police in Antipolo City. The fugitive, who was wanted for the killing of two people, was arrested by the police in Antipolo City.

Cop shot dead

A POLICEMAN was killed after a shootout on Tuesday night in Las Piñas, police said. Cop Pedro Tovar, 42, was killed after a shootout on Tuesday night in Las Piñas, police said. Cop Pedro Tovar, 42, was killed after a shootout on Tuesday night in Las Piñas, police said. Cop Pedro Tovar, 42, was killed after a shootout on Tuesday night in Las Piñas, police said.

QC dads want a break from fiestas

By DJ Yap

TO SOME, BARANGAY "FIESTA" means fabulous food, festive parties and good times for the community.

To others, however, they are just a pain in the neck—and also create a hole in the pocket.

Lawmakers in Quezon City want to end the holding of barangay fiestas to save money, put an end to fiesta-related traffic jams, and perhaps prevent people from sending asthmatic illnesses.

'Need to regulate'

In a proposed ordinance, the councilors said there was a "need to regulate the celebrations of barangay fiestas" to minimize expenses and increase the city's income savings, considering the state of the economy.

Councilors Jerry Belmonte, Diosdado Jumamoy, Eric Ryan Medina, Francisco Calalay Jr. and Janet Malaya proposed that fiesta celebrations should be limited to only one day every two years, beginning this year.

Simple Mass

In lieu of the usual pomp and pageantry, fiestas should be celebrated through a solemn and simple Mass in honor of the barangay's patron saint, according to the councilors.

The celebration for these celebrations shall also be allowed only every three years.

Voluntary donations

But the councilors said "voluntary donations" from residents for the building of fiesta arches "shall always be allowed."

If approved, the chair of the barangay's fiesta committee shall enforce the ordinance. The ordinance shall take effect 15 days after its approval and publication in a newspaper.

The proposed ordinance did not specify penalties or fines for violators.

GRATEFUL CAMINS
A relative, one of the search and rescue dogs belonging to the Philippine Canine Search and Rescue Foundation, Inc. gives a kisses Kamilo Ramela, organizer of the "Dog Day Afternoon" concert, which would benefit the rescue canine unit of the Philippine National Red Cross. The concert is set on Sept. 11. Looking on are PNRC chair Susanne Richard "Chi-Chi" Gordon (left) and Malacañang Deputy Spokesperson Ricardo Saludo. PHOTO BY DJ YAP

Did you know

THE SAN JUAN De Dios Educational Foundation, Inc., located on Roxas Boulevard, is the oldest hospital in the Philippines. It traces its roots to the arrival of the first four missionaries in the country in 1578. A lay brother who came with them, Juan San Diego, founded the hospital in Intramuros in the early 1600s. However, during the group's evacuation, having driven its load over the bridge to safety, it was left behind. It was subsequently rebuilt in Ermita, where it has been since and continues to flourish.

Ex-security guard arrested for kidnapping, extortion

By Maryjan C. Ortiz

A FORMER SECURITY GUARD who allegedly tried to kidnap and extort money from an Indian businessman was arrested by agents of the National Bureau of Investigation during an entrapment operation in Quezon City last Tuesday.

Agent Brad Cobbler, extortion and attempted kidnapping, Gen. Marcos after James interpretive of authorities charges to proceed up to be an NBI agent, according to human resources Monica Manning.

Investigation conducted by the Background Investigation Bureau (BIB) under Brad Agent Jr. Williams revealed that complainant Surinder Kumar was riding his motorcycle along Baba Street in Quezon City last Aug. 9 when the suspect and his companion flagged him down.

Claiming to be policemen, Bhatia said his self-confessed accomplice tried to drag the victim toward a car nearby, but the victim was able to escape by running toward a barangay hall. Supervising Agent Antonio Suarez, BIB executive officer, said the complainant and his family then began receiving threatening calls from the suspects.

"He received at least 20 calls from the suspect who also identified himself as an NBI agent," Suarez said in an interview with reporters. He added that the suspect demanded to set fire to his house and kill his child if he won't paid P1 million. At times, the phone calls were made by an Indian who spoke to him in Punjabi. From P1 million, the demand was later lowered to P150,000.

Bhatia was arrested while accepting the money from Kumar's brother-in-law Gurbeer Singh Sandhu at Mendiola Street in Quezon City. The suspects and his self-confessed accomplice have been charged in the Quezon City Prosecutor's Office, NBI officials said.

All party list solons should follow Rep. Etta Rosales' example

EDSA A LEFTIST LEADER COULD SO longer stomach the extortion activities of the Party People's Army (NPA) and his votes cast on decisions in the guerrilla group.

Although Party Rep. Etta Rosales called the banning of an export company much by NPA rebels "Quezonight pinoplot him."

The fate, Alter Trade, reportedly refused to pay P50 million in revolutionary taxes to the NPA.

Alter Trade is managed by his son Bob (member) who have left the movement and gone into the business of exporting wood-based handicrafts.

The MPs demand that Alter Trade pay revolutionary taxes showed that communist rebels don't respect human comrades.

Now that Rosales has denounced the extortion activities of the NPA, the other leftist members of Congress should do the same to join her in opposition they are connected with the NPA.

There have been reports, albeit unconfirmed, that some party list congressmen and senators have been giving financial support to the NPA through their constituent development fund, a euphemism for pork barrel.

***

Former Agriculture Undersecretary Rodolfo Tan-yu Balanta is reportedly ill inside a US immigration detention facility and is asking for humanitarian aid from the Philippine Embassy in Washington, D.C.

Why doesn't our embassy ask the US government to send him back to the Philippines so he can be given utmost medical attention in one of our world-class hospitals?

Anyway, Balanta can afford the expensive hospital bills and medicines because he probably has the bulk of the P7.28 million lost for Alter Trade.

***

The Department of Foreign Affairs says the government is organized to give aid to Bolanta under the Vienna Convention on consular relations as well as the Philippines' Welfare Act.

But Balanta is neither eligible of a diplomatic passport nor an overseas contract worker. So, how can he invoke the Vienna Convention or the Migrant Workers Act?

He went to the US on an expired visa to escape criminal prosecution and possible criminal charges of forgery committed with the P720-million scam.

***

Finally, the Senate has resident that it has been turned into a doormat by Malacañang. Though Executive Order 464 that bans government officials from appearing before congressional committees.

It will test the continued and tense on secret order against any official that ducks its summons.

But how can the Senate do that when the Philippine National Police and the National Bureau of Investigation are under the Executive department?

The Senate might become more credible again

ON TARGET
Ramon Tulfo

FROM LUZON TO LEBANON: PER HUMANITATEM AD PACEM

By Atty. Sullivan M. Santos, Jr.
Vice-Chair for YGOs
PNRC IHL National Committee

The Philippine's commemoration of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) this this August, comes at a time of an "all-out war" that is hobbling up on the Philippines, especially in Luzon, and of an ongoing all-out war in Lebanon. In both cases, innocent Filipinos and civilians have been thrown in the harsh and ill-fated circumstances of war. Regardless of an end to these wars, whether their causes are just or not, there is no "justness" in the grave damage done to innocent civilians, whether Filipinos or Lebanese, and to civilian infrastructure.

It appears to us, particularly on both sides of the Lebanese war, that this damage is no longer just "collateral" or incidental but deliberate—whether it is the aerial bombing of Lebanese cities, towns and villages, or the firing of rockets into southern Israeli towns. The damage, especially on Lebanon's civilian population and infrastructure, has been particularly disproportionate. If one more boy is raped as well, this is no way it should be judged. And the gross disproportionate and unjust damage done is already reason enough to end the war or cease the hostilities.

The current scenario of the all-out war in Lebanon could be the worst-case scenario of an all-out war in the Philippines.

After all, each of these wars involves the use of "overwhelming force" against an enemy that is strategically organized or engaged in "asymmetrical" and which depends for its operation "within a cave." One big difference though is that the one is an international armed conflict, while the other is an internal armed conflict. But there are rules common and specific to these two types of armed conflict. That is what IHL is all about, rules which limit the ways and means wars is waged so as to spare, protect and aid those who have no part in the war, the non-combatants, the civilians.

IHL is all the more relevant in the context of all-out war, especially globally as it is unfolding in Lebanon. Without being alarmist, human security experts have already pointed out the dire to a time of both "new wars" and "new terrorism" post-9/11. But the broader context and greatest threat to the dangers of a 21st Century war stretching from Morocco to Mindanao, but principally based in Iraq, is even more than the Middle East, arising from the potential for protracted and non-conflicts becoming linked and spiraling out of control. The least that should be done is to spare the innocent who happen to be the most vulnerable victims of war.

That in itself, if it can, as it should be done, will go a long way in eventually reaching a just and lasting peace. IHL experts have pointed out that it "helps save the road to peace." It is "the essential part of the order of peace... It makes a substantive contribution to the maintenance of peace in that it penetrates humanity in time of war." It "helps lay the foundations on which a peaceful settlement can be built once the conflict is over. This function has a lasting impact on which further IHL is developed and implemented." Perhaps the most important function of IHL is preserving the dignity and dignity of man that belligerents help maintain in that state." Further other hand, "the greater the degradation of the strife, the more difficult it becomes to bring about peace."

Precisely, the terms of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, the component of IHL, is the Humanitarian Act/Goals ("From Humanity to Peace"), which the Philippine National Red Cross (PNRC) has adopted as the basis of what IHL is all about. The Movement promotes a lasting peace, which is not simply the absence of war, but is dependent on means of cooperation among all States and peoples, cooperation founded on respect for freedom, independence, national sovereignty, equality, human rights, as well as on a fair and equitable distribution of resources to meet the needs of peoples."

PNRC hosted two weeks ago the 1st Southeast Asia regional IHL training National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in the region. The PNRC Department of Social Services is coordinating with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to secure contact between DFAIL in Lebanon and their families in the Philippines through a family links website where family links is set up. The PNRC National Headquarters has created an administrative memo for the armed conflict in Lebanon for disaster preparedness of its key and strategic regional and provincial officials due to the assessment of the possible impact on the Philippines. The PNRC IHL National Committee has issued a call for all-out support of IHL in view of President Arroyo's order for an "all-out war" to crush the communist insurgency in two years, which in turn promises to end "50 for all struggle" of all-out social democratic reforms.

Because the best deterrent to war comes not only out to war is because of the rules of war, whether committed by soldiers or by civilians, the PNRC has also been pushing for the enactment of the national implementing legislation of the Geneva Conventions, the PNRC-IHL National Committee has been pushing for the "IHL Bill" now House Bills Nos. 2624, 3197 and 4908, and Senate Bill No. 2129 to redefine and penalize war crimes, genocide, crimes against humanity, and other serious violations of IHL, especially when civilians, cultural property and acts of or involving acts of war-rape. The Philippines is a party to a number of IHL treaties, most notably the Geneva Conventions of August 12, 1949 (thus the duty for IHL Bill), but unfortunately has not yet passed the implementing legislation for these treaties.

Domestic legislation and enforcement are needed to define and punish not only terrorism but also war crimes, genocide, crimes against humanity, and other serious violations of IHL. All wars, whether wars against terrorism or against insurgency or against another country, involve basic safeguards and principles without which weapons are not used against humanity or their IHL through its dissemination service to classmates, legislators and all concerned—precisely

The WORLD

Editor Lorraine B. Bonoan

Over 40 killed in Iraq blasts despite clampdown

BAGHDAD—MORE THAN 40 PEOPLE WERE KILLED IN BOMB attacks in Iraq on Wednesday morning, including 24 at a busy market in Baghdad where insurgents seem intent on defying a major US-backed security clampdown now in its fourth week.

A further 33 people were wounded in the attack on the Shoja wholesale market in central Baghdad, police said. Attacks in recent days have shattered a relative calm this past month.

A bomb inside the nearby Karrada district killed two people and wounded 21 around the same time. A bomb went off near a busy fuel station, drawing a police unit in response. Five officers were then wounded in a second explosion, when a car detonated.

Three bombs earlier, a bomb apparently left on a parked bicycle blasted a crowd of young Iraqi men outside an army recruiting office, killing 12 people and wounding 30.

Hilla provincial police spokesperson Captain Moshtama al-Mousawi said the bicycle appeared to have been left early in the morning, laden with an explosive package, close to the office in the center of Hilla, 100 km south of Baghdad.

It went off around 8 a.m., when a crowd had gathered. It followed several days of heavy bloodshed outside the capital, where US and Iraq troops have mounted a major security crackdown.

Increasingly, concern for the Iraqi army and police, key elements of Washington's strategy for pulling out its own troops, have been frequent targets for insurgents from the Sunni Arab minority, including al Qaeda Islamists who oppose the rise of the Shi'ite Muslim majority in US-backed elections.

The mainly Shi'ite city of Hilla, close to the site of ancient Babylon, is surrounded by Sunni rural areas.

It has seen some of the deadliest sectarian bomb attacks over the past two years, including the bloodiest single blast in Iraq, when 125 people, many of them police recruits, were killed by a suicide car bomber in February 2005.

Despite the danger, young men continue to queue up at police and army recruitment centers, desperate for employment.

A large group of men responding to notices, posted school for army recruits turned outside the governor's office in Samawa, 270 km south of Baghdad, after being told to come back at the weekend, a witness said.

The witness said the police initially fired warning shots and then shot into the crowd after they began throwing rocks at the building, killing one man and wounding five. There police were also injured in the riot.

US and Iraqi officials say the security crackdown in Baghdad is having an effect, with the murder rate down by half this month over last, when dozens of people a day were being killed in the capital alone, pitching Iraq closer to civil war. Reuters

ARE THEY? A policeman shoots orders to people to step away as he stands next to an exploded car bomb in the Karrada shopping district, one of the most important in Baghdad Aug. 30. AFP

LARGEST DINOSAUR
A Chinese man poses beside one of the remains of the largest dinosaur ever to be unearthed in Asia, measuring an estimated 61 meters (134 ft), in Dazigi Prefecture, part of northwestern China's Xinjiang region, Aug. 26. China has emerged as a treasure trove of dinosaur bones, especially the northern desert region, where the absence of vegetation makes them easier to find. AFP

Israel rejects UN appeal to lift Lebanon blockade

JERUSALEM—ISRAEL REJECTED A CALL from UN Secretary General Kofi Annan on Wednesday to lift its sea-to-air and sea blockade of Lebanon, saying it would only raise the siege once all resolution of a ceasefire were in place.

During an hour of talks with Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, Annan had pressed for a lifting of the blockade, imposed after the start of the war against Lebanon's Hezbollah guerilla group on July 12, mainly on economic grounds.

But at a news conference after their meeting, Olmert rebuffed Annan, saying any relaxation of pressure on Lebanon's ports and airspace depended on the full implementation of UN resolution 1701, which governs the ceasefire with Hezbollah.

"The [resolution] is a fixed bullet and everything will be implemented, including the lifting of the blockade, as part of the entire implementation of the different articles," he said.

Olmert's tone was equally firm when it came to suggestions from Annan that Israel should withdraw all its troops from southern Lebanon within "days or weeks", once up to 5,000 UN-backed peacekeepers are on the ground.

"Israel will pull out of Lebanon once the resolution is implemented," Olmert said, indicating a longer timeline.

Annan, in Jerusalem after visiting Lebanon, is trying to strengthen a shaky two-week old truce that ended a 34-day war between Israel and Hezbollah. His top priority had been the lifting of the blockade, principally on economic grounds.

"It is important not only because of the economic effect it is having on the country but it is also important to strengthen the democratic government of Lebanon with which Israel has repeatedly said it had no problems," Annan said.

Annan said he hoped soon to double the 2,000 the number of UN troops in Lebanon and urged Israel and Hezbollah to end swiftly all disputes blocking a lasting ceasefire.

On Sunday, Israeli Defense Minister Amir Peretz said Israel would pull out thousands of troops that remain in southern Lebanon once a "reasonable" number of 200 soldiers had displaced but did not give a figure. Reuters

Resolution 1701 calls for a deployment of 15,000 UN peacekeepers by Nov. 4, alongside Lebanese army troops. Reuters

UN body in no rush to tackle Iran nuke issue

UNITED NATIONS—THE UN SECURITY Council, keen to maintain unity in its high-stakes nuclear standoff with Tehran, is expected to take its time to respond to Iran's refusal to heed demands that it suspend uranium enrichment by Thursday.

"I would expect the dossier to come back into the council [shortly], but only after a further period of discussions among capitals," Britain's UN Ambassador Emyr Jones Parry told reporters Tuesday. "I would expect activities here to resume toward the middle of September."

Jones Parry said the 15 council members and their respective capitals would first need to assess a report from the Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on whether Iran has complied with the demand that it freeze its uranium enrichment and reprocessing activities by the Aug. 31 deadline.

They would then have "to have closed consultations about what should be our next moves," he said.

The five permanent members of the UN Security Council—the US, France, Britain, Russia and China—plus Germany in June offered Iran a package of trade, technology and security incentives in exchange for a freeze of its uranium enrichment activities.

The Security Council last month set Aug. 31 as the deadline for Iran to suspend all uranium enrichment and reprocessing activities or face possible sanctions. But Tehran remains defiant.

China's UN delegate Li Junhua told AFP that the six powers were planning to have a meeting of their foreign ministry political directors around Sept. 7 to discuss the issue before sending the dossier back to the council. AFP

Air controller 'turned away' as jet crashed in Kentucky

LEXINGTON, KENTUCKY—ONLY ONE AIR controller was on duty when Bluegrass Comair flight 5191 took off at 6:06 a.m. yesterday and he turned his back to the jet very soon the wrong runway and crashed, US investigators said Tuesday.

The lone controller on the overnight shift at Blue Grass Airport cleared the fully loaded Bombardier Jet Comair early Sunday and "turned his back to perform other responsibilities," said Debbie Hersman, a member of the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), according to the Lexington Herald-Leader newspaper.

"The controller did not have visual contact with the aircraft," she said in a press conference in Lexington, Kentucky.

The ill-fated plane lined up to the pre-dawn hour-faraday on a shorter runway that was unlighted, because it was intended only for the day-time use of smaller private planes.

Investigators are baffled as to why the pilots did not see the longer runway, which was clearly named. The jetliner took off too low, clipped trees and crashed less than a mile from the airport, killing everyone but the co-pilot.

The Federal Aviation Administration acknowledged Sunday that having only one controller in the tower violated its own rules. The plane's cockpit recorders captured the voices of the captain and co-pilot commenting before takeoff that the runway on which they had lined up was unlit, Tony Williams, a spokesperson for the NTSB, told AFP.

They "made some comments about the fact that there were no lights," Williams said.

The use of two controllers before sunrise, the pilots and air traffic controller ordered only by the longer, 2,133-meter runway 22, according to the NTSB. AFP

GANARA SNATCHER
A monkey snatches bananas from a makeshift shop in the Nepali capital of Kathmandu Aug. 30. REUTERS

New test hastens diagnosis of lethal bird flu strain

BEIJING—A NEW TEST THAT SPEEDS UP DIAGNOSIS of the most dangerous avian flu, scientists have developed a detailed influenza virus that takes less than 12 hours, instead health officials said Monday.

The new technology, a microchip covered with tubes of genetic material from many different flu strains, cuts the typical time needed for diagnosis of the AH5N1 flu to less than a day, from a week or more, Xinhua said, rather than giving just a yes or no result, it usually reveals which flu a person has or an animal has.

That means that public health officials investigating, for example, a flu outbreak in poultry or in humans in a remote Asian or African village will be able to decide quickly whether to kill thousands of birds or to treat hundreds of potentially exposed people with expensive anti-viral drugs.

Right now, ascertaining whether a flu is of the lethal AH5N1 strain requires that a sample be frozen and shipped to a highly secure laboratory, usually in a major city like Tokyo or Hong Kong, where the virus can be grown in eggs, isolated and genetically sequenced, a process that takes four to five days plus shipping time and runs the risk of samples deteriorating in transit and being refused.

The new test, called FluChip, can be performed in any laboratory that can amplify bits of genetic material, many countries have such labs, centers in their national capitals, if not in provincial hospitals. New York Times/News Service

WORLDBRIEFS

13th UK bomb suspect

LONDON—A young British Muslim arrested during an investigation into an attempted to blow up 10 transatlantic airliners was charged with conspiracy to murder, police said on Tuesday. Rashid Rauf, 25, is the 13th person charged in connection with the plot and the sixth to face the most serious charge of conspiracy to murder and planning acts of terrorism. Like the other eight suspects, he was accused of plotting to smuggle parts of home-made bombs on to planes, then build the bombs and detonate them. Reuters, from court London, is due to appear at a magistrates' court in central London on Wednesday morning. Reuters

20 patrol scavengers killed

MAE DHAWA, Iraq—At least 20 people were killed when a truck caught through scavengers siphoning petrol from pipes around a break in a disused pipeline in central Iraq late on Monday, health officials said. Dozens more were missing and may have been killed. A Reuters reporter at the site in the town Dhuluiya, 180 km south of Baghdad, saw 15 charred and mutilated bodies, including that of a boy. The explosion wounded 28 people, who were taken to area hospitals with severe burns. "Some of the wounded have burns to 70 percent of their bodies," Ramzi Jaafi, a health official in Dhuluiya told Reuters, adding the death toll is expected to climb. Reuters

S. Africa passes mercenaries bill

CAPE TOWN—South Africa passed an anti-mercenaries law on Tuesday that could bar thousands of its nationals from working for security companies in global hotspots such as Iraq and from other national armies. Defense Minister Mosiuoa Lekota told lawmakers before the bill was passed by an overwhelming majority that one of the intentions of the measure was to stop local recruiters for "subverting democracy" across Africa. The government wants to stop soldiers and former soldiers—many honored in the apartheid army—fighting or offering security services after South Africans were found to be involved in a number of attempted coups and conflicts in Africa. Reuters

Israel kills 5 Palestinians

GAZA—Israeli troops killed five Palestinians and wounded a dozen more in an air strike on militants in Gaza City and the West Bank on Tuesday, medics and witnesses said. Troops in Gaza, who launched an offensive in June to free an abducted soldier and suppress a rain from the ruled Strip, fired a tank shell into a crowd in the Dejaia district, and killed an engineer, killing two people and wounding three, witnesses said. An army spokesperson said troops identified two militants armed with an anti-tank missile and fired at them. AFP

60 inmates bolt E. Timor jail

DILI, East Timor—Nearly 60 inmates escaped from an East Timor jail on Wednesday, including a former military police chief and militia leader who organized the country's brutal 1999 Indonesian rule. The prison wardens said Carlos Caramelo said at least 57 inmates fled the Becora Penitentiary in the capital Dili after breaking down several walls on the east wing. Among those who escaped was Maj. Alfredo Reinado, former chief of East Timor military police and arrested pro-Jakarta militiaman sentenced in connection with 1999 violence that left nearly 1,000 people dead. AP

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PEST'S Jaymes Sinsa huddles for a reformed against San Sebastian's Francis On Lam in their game yesterday

SPORTS

MINIVOLLEY

Salud key to cage unity

By Marvin R. Castillo

THE TWO FACTIONS CLAIMING SUPREMACY over the legitimate basketball body in the Philippines have one more mind to possibly bend this week: unified siege group.

Rudy Salud, author of the Build Bonding Committee resolution and the main voice around the PBA's re-unprecedented tougher at this late 50s and early 60s or commissioner has been approached by both the basketball association of the Philippines and Filipinas Basketball to help draw up the new group's bylaws, among other things.

The 68-year-old confirmed this development in an exclusive interview with the Inquirer late last night, adding several conditions have to be satisfied for him to consider the offer.

"One of those requirements would have to do the up-signed from the two bits," said Salud, who had a more substantial version of the peacemakers implement on Feb. 14. "The losing a high profile case, the losing a of doctors who did the peacemakers thinks that this could be highly extended."

Salud, who was also a highly respected leader in amateur boxing, said that he expects to get a nod from Jose Conrado Benitez, under-secretary for sports development, before working on two other pre-requisites he laid down to BAP president Amy Lina and PB head Sonny Barrios.

"The first thing they'd have to agree on would be the name," Salud said. "I understand the sensitivity of the matter, the BAP

SALUD

[name] boasts tradition and history and the [illegible] name is very BAP.

"But personally, I'd like for the BAP name to stay and for anything else [illegible] thereon, discard that."

Salud said that this matter is contingent upon the second requirement, which has to be BAP and PB could work out with the Philippine Olympic Committee at the soonest time possible.

"I want to assurance that the POC will approve the joining of the latest group's constitution automatically," Salud said. "Otherwise, what we will be doing will be of no use to any of us."

The possibility of Salud heading the new cage body came after the BAP and PB had forged an agreement with the world governing Fiba in organizing a new, unified body.

It's decision ironed from Tokyo recently, the Central Board said that it would only lift the suspension on the Philippine arm of the Fiba [illegible] if a unified body is formed.

Among the Fiba pre-conditions are the formulation by the unified BAP-PB group of a new constitution and bylaws, the election of the new group's officers and—according to a source close to both parties—the ratification of the BAP.

All the moves taken by this new group will be assessed weekly, Bobby Maduro, the incoming Fiba president who is also a member of the committee together with Carl Ching Moala, Borislav Stankovic, Swick Hausoon and Tom Seok Chee Hoh.

Lions rip Cardinals, top elims

By Marc Anthony Reyes

SAN BEDA SECURED THE FINAL FOUR TOPspot and consigned the No. 4 post jinx to Mapua yesterday.

The Red Lions kept on pounding despite feeble opposition from the Cardinals early in the fourth quarter to fashion out a 73-59 victory in the NCAA men's basketball tournament at the Filoil Flying V Arena.

It was the 12th consecutive triumph and 13th overall against a lone loss for San Beda which is unsmirched of the No. 1 slot even if the Lions drop their final game against second-running Letran Saturday.

In topping the eliminations for the first time since the 1991 season, the Lions also set up a semifinal duel against their victims while enjoying the twice-to-beat advantage.

Mapua could otherwise last potentially give up the fight with still some minutes to go when Sean Anguluan's two-handed steal while preserving an unsportsmanlike foul by Johnson Bautista on a shooting Samuel Dizon.

He recalled his frontliners in favor of his second stringers with the Lions ahead at 57-42 and the Cardinals eventually fell to 7-6.

"I think he's trying to prevent injuries and so on and maybe for the Final Four," said coach Boo Manuel of Jose Belo, who finished 4-11 in scoreless run.

Escobal and Ahmad topscored with 17 points each for the Lions, who raided the boards, 62-52. Dizon rose to their defense pacing the 11 strikeouts.

Earlier, Jose Mari downed San Sebastian, 89-76, to stay the Stags and idle Perpetual at 6-8.

In the juniors games, Philippine Christian Industrial School, 90-63, to the down of the Golden to their insurance. The Eagles edged the Light Bombers, 79-77, to cop the first division of boys' play.

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RP divers, swimmers aim for big splash

SHEILA Mae Perez

PBA leaves Asiad stint up to Chot

REYES

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Bata, Django head crack Pinoy team

Sherwood sweeps Fed League 1st round

NCFP q'fying tourney set

Tagaytay to defend crown

US OPEN: Amelie Mauresmo of France returns a shot to Kristina Barrois of Germany at the US Open tennis tournament. Story on A29.

Butuan hosts Milo Marathon Sunday

Lions rip . . .

New Era U edges AMA, stays alive

By Marc Anthony Reyes

JEFF DE GUZMAN TIED HOME OF RED CARD-high 23 points in the fourth quarter, including two clinchers in the last eight seconds, as New Era University overcame comeback-bid-behind AMA 89-85 to win over AMA Computer University in the Metropolitan Athletics Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities at the Ultra Gym.

Coming off a three-game absence due to knee injury, De Guzman ignited their late rebound by hanging a three-pointer to the last 13 seconds to give the Warriors a 78-76 lead which stood.

Alvin Ray and Chino Anino then went on to the lining line for subsequent put-outside by Ryan Lopez for the Gamecocks capped his performance by putting the Arrow ball before Daryl Fowler finished him and sent him to the line with eight seconds to go.

The win, pumped the into the Warriors' tying campaign to three posted a 3-5 record in the season-opening tournament, moving idle Centro Escolar and University of Manila.

The Titans fell to 4-4 for third place behind Jackson's (5-3) and Intercollegiate Cardio (6-2).

Rony Teagno provided solid help for the Warriors with 20 points, while Jerome Bell-Isaacs chipped in 11 points.

AMA (89) Banes 7, Alas 12, Padilla 9, Vergara 6, Salazar 6, De Guzman 3, Garbo 2, Suarez 9, Flores 9, Mabeli 9, Dela Peña 0.

Warriors (85) 43, 32, 23, 24-12, 85-76

Archery bares new program

THE NATIONAL ARCHERY ASSOCIATION OF THE Philippines unveiled its comprehensive development program that will mark the crusade of its athletes. NAAP president Cornelio Pe Bonoan recently discussed with mayor Jose Inton Jr., head of the national sports association's committee on competition matters, and former Manila Mayor Lito Atienza, saying earlier to meet the archers' financial needs including and competition and provide adequate exposure in the international archery scene. Archery is a sport in numerous where Filipinos have the potential to excel in international competition. It is also an inexpensive sport for the community, government officials and individual sponsors to support archery.

ADAMSON'S Red Hapinlan and UE's Kevin Gregorio will open first encounter guarding each other today. ARQUISOLA (UE)

Warriors seek Final 4 bonus versus Falcons

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE EAST WARriors try to secure the twice-to-beat semifinal bonus when they tangle with the Adamson Falcons today in the UAAP men's basketball finance meet at the Mines Angeles Stadium.

The Warriors will try to move closer to the league-leading Mapua Cagers at 4 p.m., right after the lone Perez Titans attempt to strengthen their Final Four bid versus the University of the Philippines Diliman at 2 o'clock.

Although slightly battered, the Warriors are expected to pull out all stops as they pursue another victory goal.

"If we can go all the way up to the No. 1 slot, it will be better," said UE coach Dindo Pumaren. "We're not going to settle just because we're already in number two. We're in a playoff."

"Right now, our game has picked up compared to the first round," said Pumaren. "We've been playing good defense [with] team and ball team."

Although the Warriors nearly the Falcons in their initial encounters, 72-71, Pumaren cited the dominating performance of Falcons center Emmanuel Ilagan in his last outing.

Ilagan exploded early Tuesday and 12 rebounds against the Maroons last Saturday to deny the Falcons at the meeting for their first Final Four berth.

"They're still around, they can still go up to number three," said Pumaren of the Falcons, the only team that knocked the Final Four twice the former semi-finalists in 1994.

Tigers coach Pido Jarencio for host just to confident in Pumaren after holding the Arrow Eagles' eight-game winning streak, 86-80, to overtime last Sunday.

Bucking a crippled lineup, Jarencio drew big games from rookie shooters Jerry Cruz and Allan Evangelista.

"We lost our key players, but this team has potential," he said. "There will always be some new stepping up."

The Tigers, who jumped to third place at 3-3, have been missing the services of rookie stars Jerard Mocorro, Jeff Viernes and Jeff Cariño due to various illnesses and injuries.

"We were never complete, so we're just working on what we have," said Jarencio.

The Maroons, who topped the Tigers, 94-81, in the first round, are out of the running in the Final Four after losing five straight games. Assuming the Falcons

UAAP mark: Tigers' main driving force

By Marc Anthony Reyes

OF ALL THE TEAMS THAT CAME OUT AND tried to stop Adamson's crushing run in the UAAP 1st century of James Tiongson had the biggest motivation.

The Tigers put him other schools holding streaks.

Nothing personal against the Eagles, but the Tigers simply do not want any school to come even within two decades of what they accomplished 15 years ago.

It was in 1991 when a powerhouse UST squad powered by the likes of Dennis Espino, Ric Rodriguez, Edmund Reyes, Chris Cantonjos, Siot Tanquingcen, Rudolph Belmonte and Patrick Fran outlasted a 14-game sweep of the Cloud9 capped by a marathon showdown with the Ateneo de Tiongson had Adamson's throat.

"That was one of my motivations," admitted ex-UST Tigers manager Herman Arroyo.

Compiled by injuries and various ailments, UST was the school least likely to halt the Moro juggernaut soon to arrive in the Eagles clutches be Tigers, 11-4-70, last Aug. 6.

Still sustaining the services of four top players—starters Jamel Herrera and Anjo Iñigo and top reserves Jess Cortez and Anthony Espinida, the Tigers seemed helpless in stopping the Eagles from soaring to a school second time straight win.

But within a mere of their history under steps, a different pack of Tigers faced the Eagles last week. Although they needed extra time to pull it off, the 80-88 victory was all that mattered for UST.

"Our best player Jamel Herrera is out of the tournament three of our pull for guys on the bench," said Arroyo. "We just had great support especially to get 'by. Maybe that was one of the reasons we were 'satisfied' in the locker room."

And they had a second to protect, too.

Almost lost in the din of the drubber was another goal that UST achieved with the victory.

"We really needed to win that game to be able to gain ourselves in the Final Four," said Arroyo, adding that before the game, the coaching staff managers and UST players sat down with the entire squad and talked about the importance of the match and the obstacles they were going to face.

At the same time, Cloud9 have also started to peak at the right time as the Tigers rallied from a 10th down 1998, the start of a four-title run that was look-started by that 14-0 sweep.

Should get out of the UST hospital, with skippers and Coyne standing spendy reinventee from tightened lives.

Read that UST shooters are already taking action, getting all the players ready for the UAAP 69th.

"They believe all the players have overcome all the crisis already, and it is just [going through as] an athlete's personal," he said.

Dacanay keeps faith with Pasa

By Jasmine W. Puyo

CAE A HORRIBLE/EVE 2006th, rating talent exist in the international range?

While most of the country's top swimmers have taken the global route, collegiate standout Lara Dacanay has been pulling her faith into the local sports program.

"I had plans to go for Rider, but my program is swimming has has improved a lot," said Dacanay, a mainstay in the 400-meter individual medley in the 2005 Southeast Asian Games.

Still, the success of UA-trained swimmers...does homer scene, rising swimmers Eric Buhain and Akiko Thompson to current swimmers Miguel Molina, Akiko Thompson and Miguel Mendoza...Dacanay knows it may take some time to prove that locally trained athletes can be just as good.

The 21-year-old Molina, for instance, was a member of the last Sea-ranked Filipino in the last SEA Games.

Rooted by years of training at the University of California, Berkeley, Molina bagged three gold and a silver in individual events and a bronze medal in the relay.

DACANAY: Who used expensive trips to be competitive. ARQUISOLA (UE)

"I haven't asked them how different their training program is, but I think there's a gap because they're getting more exposure," said Dacanay. "They get to swim in more competitions."

Dacanay, though, has been making waves in the collegiate scene before settling for a run-set up finish in the SEA Games.

The 20-year-old leader bagged the 2005 Athlete of the Year plum in the University Athletic Association of the Philippines (UAAP) after clinching seven gold medals—two in record-breaking fashion—in the women's swimming competition last season.

Dacanay set a new mark in the 200m backstroke (2 minutes and 27.82-second) and in the 200m butterfly (2.20.95). She also sailed in the 50m and 100m butterfly, 200m and 400m individual medley and 400m freestyle.

Last June, Dacanay dominated the Philippine Olympic festival by sweeping golds in the 400m individual medley, 200m backstroke, 100m freestyle and 50m freestyle and a silver in the 100m freestyle.

"My last stint some more experience to be competitive," said Dacanay, a Ponsly's Inc.-sponsored development junior student at the University of the Philippines. "But then [Philippine Amateur Swimming Association] has been very supportive. They've also been sending us abroad for training."

Each program has its drawbacks, but Dacanay is not complaining.

"I think we're starting to get good exposure," she said. "Before the SEA Games, we trained in Orion. We were only there for seven months, but that seemed wonderful for us."

SPORTSWATCH

Lyceum, CSA spikers score twin-kill

THE LYCEUM OF THE PHILIPPINES-GAINESVILLE PROMISED IN THE volleyball competition of the 7th Southern Luzon Colleges and Universities Athletic Association (SLCAA) as it sweepled both the men's and women's competitions at the Pinecrest Gymnasium in Calamba, Laguna. The Lyceum Men's team's spikers overcame the Pioneer of Manila College Sentinels 25-20, 25-14, 20-25, 25-21 while the women's team defeated their male counterparts 25-19, 25-23, 25-19 to advance to the gold medal match. Meanwhile, the CSA Lions swept the Colegio San Agustin-Bacoor 25-19, 25-20, 25-23 while the girls' team defeated the Lyceum Pirates, 25-14, 25-17, 25-15.

Superal posts longest drive

JERSELY SUPERAL OF WORLD JOURNAL PERFECTED 214 YARDS IN three 17 years and before division of the Sunday Longest Drive Challenge qualifying last Saturday at the Fort Bonifacio Golf Country Club. Other qualifiers were Jason Sagaral, who ruled the women's open with a 194-yards, Jose Noel Vicquera, who bagged the senior's crown with a drive of 207-yards, and Jonathan Lucero and Jojo Lucero, who bagged the 50-plus and above. The best ten qualifying rounds will be held at the Manila Southwoods Golf Country Club.

12th Gary Liong golf Sept. 11

THE BIGGEST NAMES IN ENTERTAINMENT, BUSINESS AND POLITICS SET TO gather on Sept. 11 to see action in the 12th staging of the Gary Liong Golf Classic at the Mt. Diana layout in Laguna. Former president Fidel V. Ramos becomes the oldest golfer with Boracay Mayor Jun Jun Bautista as the youngest. Among the other golfers are Boracay Mayor Jun Jun Bautista, Ariel Vilma, Bodie Mortimore and songstress Vonna Varga and Sunkist CEO Ben Tiongco, Alistair Brimblecombe and Ace Barbers have confirmed participation in the 18-hole event.

LGBA derby returns at Araneta

THE LUZON GAMEBIRD BREEDERS ASSOCIATION (LGBA) is all set for the 30-day encounter of the Araneta Coliseum today with 1,121 cockers. The Bonifacio-style at 10 a.m. is the main sponsorship by Boardwalk Lafayette Resort, Pasona, Bonifacio Drive and Jose Abad Santos. Out to steal the spotlight are Dodo Lim, Dindo Cabrera, Dr. Pete Bonoy Lagos, Ronnie Wesley Sanchez, Jose Jaime Wilfredo Sy, Arnaz Garbo, Joel Fernandez, Pascual Bonoan, Nestor Cabrera, Rodito Bonoan, Nestor Cabrera, Joseph Chua and Sec. Larry Wheeling. Co-champs in last Tuesday's opening leg were Reigno team-mates of Bengal Lee, Bill Mitra Reel 1st Puffy Enriquez, Edwin Arnaiz, Boy Sarabia and Mitra Bolton and AP Top Cut of Edwin Arnaiz.

'Showdown' at Roligon set Sept. 3

WITH ONE MORE TEAM FOR CONFIRMED, OWNERS ARE AT YESTERDAY THE ready if finished "Big Showdown 4-cocky derby" finally unveiled at Roligon Mega Cockpit on Sept. 3, 5 and 7. The event will start at 12 noon on Saturday, due before big contest schedules, such as reminders Boxing Tv and Romancy Tv who also booked their own derbies on the same dates. The "Showdown" highlights the following: Wednesday, Friday, Sept. 1 at Roligon office, Barrio Kaunlaran in Bocaue from 1-7 bgm to 2 bgs only. For inquiries, call 0920-9458 and 0920-9820 or 0917-6227 BM. Screening and weighing will also be held at Roligon's entrance for walk-in participants, especially those from the provinces.

Fastest Win event today at UPC

COCKERS AND BREEDERS FROM LAGUNA, CALOOCAN, MONTALBAN, PARAÑAque, Pasay and Las Piñas compete in Las Piñas Coliseum's P1,500 Fastest Win One-Cock Derby at 10 a.m. today. The following prizes are at stake: Best-in-show champion, P15,000; second, P10,000; third, P5,000; fourth, P3,000; fifth to ninth, P1,000. Each flight fee will cost P1,000 per cock. Interested breeders for registration may contact Mackenzie, Lemuel Sec, Antonio Pendo and the 7th entry Las Piñas Trading derby event after this derby. Cookie Dee, 4-8 and 8 second 4-0-8 [one hour] record. Runaway top score Bonifacio Lee (Poten Tree), Mayor Ramon Aguilar (Black Gold), R. Pineda (2) M. Bartolome (Gil), and Rudy Alcuaz (Mahogany). For inquiries, call 0917-6227 or 0920-9458.

SPORTS

USA's Carmelo Anthony challenges Germany's Dirk Nowitzki. The Americans and the Germans were playing for a semifinal slot at press time. AP

Greece lightning zaps France

Sets semis duel vs US

SAITAMA, JAPAN—Greece held France to its lowest point total of the tournament in a 73-58 victory Wednesday that moved it into the semifinals for the third time in the last four World championships.

Greece (7-0) advanced to the final four and will meet the United States on Friday.

Giorgos Ambrosiadis scored 13 of his 18 points in the third quarter and the Greeks blasted open an ou to beat Germany, 85-65.

Lefteris Alexiou added 13 points for the United States, which broke away from a one-point halftime lead by using a flurry of steals and blocks to outscore Germany 13-2 over a nearly six-minute span in the third period.

Entering the quarterfinals, Spain, Argentina and the United States were the undefeated teams garnering almost all of the attention. Like Davis, Greece didn't lose one of its three tune-up games, and its overall win-loss mark here is even more impressive.

"This game showed our team can control the games and play the way we need to play to win games," Greece coach Panagiotis Yannakis said. "Basketball is not only dribbling and shooting. It is about defense. My team can put ups out of the reach."

Former 14-31, which came in averaging 7.0 points per game, struggled from the start against Greece, managing only 24 points in trailing by 20 in halftime.

"We were careless at the beginning of the game but we were not by ourselves," Petrou said. Coach Claude Bergeaud said. "With their pressure they forced us to miss."

AP

Hatfield returns, agrees to one-year deal with Kings

By Francis Ochoa

HE SHOWED UP AT THE Greenwood tennis practice facility in civilian clothes Tuesday. The tennis he came in playing gear preceding its media trollfest.

But despite Gerdito's stern rule of the roughest tennis etiquette.

Rudy Hatfield joined his new teammates at Barangay Ginebra preboxing breakfasting the Kings instantly into a powerhouse squad in the coming Philippine Basketball Association season.

Now, if only Jong Hidalgo can get his collection of tears to avail from the same page of the playbook.

"Games are won on the court, not on paper," said Hidalgo. "Now we can get all of the players to meet that a lot for the sake of the team, we should be able to compete every night."

Gerdito, the addition of Hatfield boosts the Kings, who already boast a formidable line-up of Bill Mark, Mark Caguioa, Jaybee Hakenbrand, Noral Ashford, Andy Seigle, Ball Bowie and Billy Mamaril.

"He's in pretty good shape," Hidalgo said of Hatfield. "After all, he is coming off a Rookie's Cup game (in Detroit) and when you go through that, you have to be in good physical shape."

Hatfield has all the time to get just that after doing many with one of the few distractions accounting his transfer to Gerdito. The decision I considering agreed to arrangements to a one-year contract with the Kings.

"He wants to have his options open at the end of the season," said Gerdito team manager Alfie Castillo. "After all, he is coming from a layoff so he wants to see how far he is on the road of the game."

"But negotiations went smoothly and he was so easy to talk to," said Castillo, who did not divulge the terms of the deal.

Hatfield acquired the right to be drafted in a blockbuster deal that gave the Kings Edward Joel Bowels. But there were speculations as to whether he would come back at all to the Philippines, having decided on a three-year contract in Detroit, where he grew up.

Hidden quoted Hatfield as saying that he enjoyed "because of [my] love and passion for the game."

Castillo, on the other hand, revealed that Hatfield was also on a solid work training at self-Hindi regime.

AFTER RAIN-OUT

Federer, Nadal, Sharapova up next

NEW YORK—TOP SEED ROGER FEDERER and No. 2 Rafael Nadal are to arrive at the US Open on Wednesday with players, organizers and spectators alike hoping for better weather.

Federer, gunning for his third straight US Open title, will play Taipei's Yen Tzu-Yung in the first round, and archrival Nadal faces Australian wild card Mark Philippoussis.

Ninth-seeded Maria Sharapova and Australian Open champion Justine Henin will be in action for the first time in the tournament.

Sharapova takes on Elizabeth Kaspiak of the Netherlands in one of the marquee night matches at Arthur Ashe Stadium, and Henin faces Shuai Peng of China in Louis Armstrong Stadium.

Meanwhile, it's probably fair to say Nikolai Davydenko is one of the biggest female fans on the planet.

The 7-foot-6, 322-pound 12-14-metre, 144-kilogram Russian, the World Tennis Association heavyweight champion, paid a visit to the US Open on Tuesday, stopping by the players' lounge to look for countrywomen Dinara Safina and Elena Dementieva.

"He's the Jolly Red Giant," the seven-time Grand Slam winner said, referring to Davydenko's nickname. "I'm playing tennis? Man, I had no idea!"

Asked if he would consider a career move to a similar job, Kim said: "I'm playing tennis? Man, I had no idea!"

Does he have any ideas for how to better promote tennis?

"I just would not single out sports," King said. "I would better promote anything."

Reuters, AP

RAPID—and to be fast-tracked as enough stadium—full on the US Open Tuesday, as two specialists stubbornly wait for action to continue. All games, though, were rescheduled. AP

BUSINESS

Editor Raul D. Marcelo • Assistant Editor Corrie S. Mariano

Peso hits 6-month high of 50.945 to $1

Demand for independent directors booming in RP

But good governance remains elusive

By Dane L. Lucas

Investor sentiment on RP improving

By Doris C. Dumlao

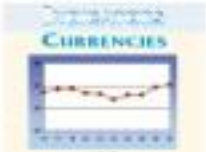
THE PESO YESTERDAY BREACHED THE KEY 50:$1 barrier to close at a six-month high of 50.945 against the dollar as investors cheered the country's improving economic fundamentals and the expected tailend of the United States' interest rate increases.

"The peso continues to appreciate on the country's positive sentiment about the Philippines due to better-than-expected fiscal numbers and an anticipated good economic growth," Insight Investment Pilipinas Governor Armando Tetangco Jr. told reporters yesterday.

"Strong regional currencies also partly to market expectations that the US will pause in its tightening cycle are also contributing to the peso's gains," he said.

In previous months, investors dread...

PESO, B2



Stocks end lower

...today, with most of the action centered on the prospect of foreign holdings somewhat

STOCKS, B4

Weak governance culture

A study released last year by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) institute—the think tank of the Manila-based multilateral lender—suggests that a significant number of corporate failures were caused, or aided at some point, by poor corporate governance.

That is, corporate leaders failed to ensure that they or their managers pursued the interests of the company and its stakeholders.

The study goes so far as to blame the outbreak of the 1997 East Asian financial crisis on the poor quality of corporate governance in the region.

"Poor corporate governance is widely viewed as one of the structural weaknesses that were responsible for the ... Asian crisis," the ADB paper said, adding that the problem was especially true in family-controlled firms.

"In companies controlled by family owners, these owners could pursue their private interests at the expense of minority shareholders and the firms' profits," it added.

From this "structural flaw" was born the worldwide drive to improve the transparency and responsibilities of company boards to their shareholders.

In the Philippines, the reforms began in 2001 as the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) under the leadership of then Governor Rafael B. Buenaventura, put after a tussle with the failed Urban Bank, which he believes was itself brought down by weak governance practices.

The BSP-initiated reforms have since been adopted by the Securities and Exchange Commission and enforced implemented across the board on private banks too.

One of the most visible aspects of this re-

GOVERNANCE, B2

PAL posts banner year on 63% profit increase

PHILIPPINE AIRLINES (MIHO) A profit of P209.7 million on revenues of $1.241 billion for its fiscal year that ended last March 31, 2006, PAL chair Lucio C. Tan and president Jaime J. Bautista expected to the flag carrier's shareholders yesterday.

The profit represented a 63-percent increase over the previous fiscal year's P128 million. It was the airline's most profitable year in more than a decade. PAL last reported a similar rounding P20 million in 1995, when it booked $40.1 million.

"It was a banner year for PAL as the numbers that contributed the industry fell short of supporting its bottom line," Tan and Bautista said in a statement to stockholders during their annual meeting.

For the first time, PAL reported its 5-month statements to U.S. dollars, the airline's functional currency. The move, which complies with Philippine Financial Reporting Standards and International Accounting Principles, aligns PAL's reporting process with the global nature of its business, removing the distortion caused by exchange rate movements, the airline said.

Revenues expanded by $100 million, or 15 percent on account of raising prices to passengers by both passenger and cargo businesses. Virtually all key performance indices, including those measuring capacity, traffic and range and load factor, improved from year-ago levels.

PAL was buoyed by economic recovery in its biggest markets (the Philippines, the United States and Japan) which spurred air travel in those countries, as well as by demands in booming new markets, such as China. In November 2005, the airline launched service to Beijing, its third point on the mainland.

However, expenses also jumped by $103 million or 14 percent to $1.22 billion, due largely to the engines deemed rise in the price of aviation fuel. The benchmark Mean of Platt's Singapore (MOPS) averaged $71.80 a barrel compared to $49.82 just a year earlier, an increase of 44 percent.

"While the airline industry anticipated oil price spikes, having grease arrangements in stock, it never expected fuel prices to hit shockingly high levels during the period," the statement said.

Despite this, PAL managed to keep expenses in check by cutting costs and improving systems. For instance, the airline's revenue management, reservations and ticketing systems are now configured to drive down distribution costs. Electronic ticketing is available on 70 percent of PAL flights, including all domestic routes.

Stocks ...

From page B1

Banks Equitable PCI and Banco de Oro.

The benchmark 30-company Philippine Stock Exchange Index fell 3.91 points, or 0.3 percent, to 2,306.76, after rising 1.2 percent since the past two sessions.

Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. contributed mainly to the loss, shedding one percent to P1,900 after rising 2.1 percent earlier in the week.

Equitable PCI, the country's third-largest lender by assets, climbed 3.26 percent to P79, while Banco de Oro, ranked seventh in the industry by assets, advanced 4.3 percent to P36.50.

On Tuesday, Banco de Oro parent SM Investments said it would make a tender offer, together with its affiliates, for all Equitable PCI shares on top of the 54 percent it already holds in the bank.

Analysts said SM's offer could be the solution to the stalemate involving the much-anticipated merger of Banco de Oro and Equitable PCI—a union that could create the country's largest bank by assets.

SM Investments rose 0.6 percent to P235. Another SM-controlled commercial bank, China Bank, rose 0.7 percent to P700.

Cosmos bid declined 39 to 35, while 37 stocks were unchanged. AP

Something is croaking

THOSE OF YOU PRESIDENT!

Okay, that's an exaggeration. But it sometimes describes what I, as one of the millions of members of the pension funds SSS and GSIS, feel about the recent surprise move of Senate by the heir apparent of SM group founder Henry Sy, for majority of the control of both funds DYSB-Tesino. If true the last straw of Senate Sy as Sr.

The SM group announcement that it would pay cash for all of the DYSB shares at P92 per share is the most price-wise a big group has the PAL's type that the group settled quite for the SSS-vetted shares of the bank, and it beat the DYSB valuation of P56 a share that the group brought up to the "share swap" merger proposal with Banco de Oro.

Well, the reporter word now is CASH (Cash is what all banks such as BPI, Metro Bank, Metrobank, and even the old Equitable paid for in acquiring other banks.)

With that single move, Senate Sy announced my prayers for a bright future, a really rich future. Not only for me but for SSS and GSIS members in their investment in DYSB.

Obviously, such a cash buyout was also the desire of GSIS president and general manager Winston Garcia. (As Cebu businessmen hop-tales was only willing to unload the 5.08 shares in DYSB if he would not have to worry about the Development.)

And so what did Garcia call the SM group announcement again—"meditation?"

Still, based on media reports, I detect hesitancy from the head of that fellow pension fund, members of the SSS president Corazon Dela Paz.

Let's call it "caution." Dela Paz said the decision to withdraw at not to SSS would sell the SP-CD shares at the price offered by the SM group was up to the corporation. Besides, she pointed out that the SSS shares were still involved in court cases and that other interested parties (anyone who might offer a higher price. Or not?

She may have valid points, but the count can't agree all alone the pricing of the shares. If the SSS would already get the best—again, the BEST... going from the SM group, the count can't count on the SSS president Dela Paz.

Global last point, nonetheless, Dela Paz hinted at the possibility of a higher bid. Indeed, stock market analysts noted that, at P92 per share payable in two years, the "net present value" of the SM group offer is only P80 a share.

Now, according to the analysts, they "discount rate are low enough to small shareholders in the stock market, particularly because of the two-year wait. Union Bank, for instance, is acquiring Chinabank recently, offered instant cash.

Considerable factor, head of treasury at Banco de Oro Unibank, yesterday said foreign and local investors have registered a strong appetite for Philippine portfolio assets. "There is no perceived meltdown in the domestic economy.

"Investors are narrowing into the market. They are more constructive because political issues have died down, there's expectation of lower inflation and the government's bond rate change is expected to be successful," she said.

The government expects to move in target to raise as much as P20 billion worth of new 10-year local bonds in exchange for other government securities after the offer period to swap debt papers matured in December.

Foreign portfolio investments in the Treasury's local bond exchange program said the market responded favorably to the government's offering given the outlook for a steady or declining interest rates as well as improving interest rate environment.

The swap is expected to streamline the average maturity of the government's domestic debts while investors would get higher yields on the new bonds.

The government's bond exchange program also aims to entice investors which are not actively traded in the secondary market and replace them with more actively-carrying maturities more demanded by the market.

Earlier this year, it bought back P111 billion worth of peso-denominated government securities with new instruments denominated in three-, five- and seven-year maturities.

Currency traders said the BSP continued to unleash the peso's strengthening as the would help in its inflation-targeting policy.

A strong peso, despite some tradeoff in terms of lower export margins, tempers the country's inflation rate by reducing the import bill, particularly the purchase of oil from offshore suppliers.

The BSP recently announced that it expects the country's inflation rate to ease further to 5.8-6.5 percent in August as the strong peso and favorable farm harvests tempered increases in global oil prices and domestic like fuel.

The forecast of a softer inflation rate for August was in line with the BSP's outlook that inflation would slow down for the rest of the year and return to the targeted path of 4.5 percent next year.

Demand for independent ...

From page B1

form drive a the newly-named role of independent directors.

Complying for compliance's sake

According to the SEC, an independent director must not be a major shareholder, officer or substantial shareholder, a "independent of management and free from any business or other relationship" which could, or could reasonably be perceived to, materially interfere with his exercise of independent judgment as a director.

The rules for the independent director must not be a director or officer or substantial stockholder of the corporation or of its related companies or any of its substantial shareholders.

He must not be an officer of any director, officer or substantial shareholder of the corporation, its related companies or any of its substantial shareholders.

More importantly, he must not be acting as a nominee or representative of a substantial shareholder of the corporation, any of its related companies or any of its substantial shareholders.

He must not have been employed in any executive capacity by the company, any of its related companies or by any of its substantial shareholders within the last five years from his appointment. He must also not be retained as professional advisor by the company, any of its related firms or any of its substantial shareholders either personally or through his firm.

Finally, he must not have engaged in any transaction with the corporation or with any of its related companies or with any of its substantial shareholders, other than transactions which are conducted at "arms length."

"All these rules are meant to help ensure that the independent director acts in the interest of the minority stockholders," Securities Regulation Commissioner Perfecto Yasay Jr. said. "He is supposed to look out for the interests of shareholders other than that of the owner."

Naturally, such noble intentions are easier said than done.

Recent data by the Institute of Corporate Directors, many firms, especially the mid-sized to smaller ones, have yet to buy into the concept of independent directors, even as they faithfully comply with the regulatory requirements.

"Some are just doing it for the sake of compliance," said ICD executive director Jonathan Jose Moreno.

Convincing firms to follow the spirit, rather than the letter of the law, is the real challenge, he said. (To be concluded)

Breaktime

Conrado B. Bonsol IV

In another local sneaking tidbit over a year possible, if it is not already in the offing. One of the taipans (we shall hide their names the name of "Bonsol B." (although he real name is John Vinkenpeel Jr.) is also talking in front of the GSIS.

What if, to expound on the views of Dela Paz, just by some stroke of luck among GSIS and GSIS members, the new pension funds—together we can—put their 49 percent placement in the DYSB—to be offered as a public holding?

That is the only thing that can now stand in the way of the "tender offer" from Senate Sy and the SM group.

...

ALL ALONG, according to BCDA president Narciso Abaya, the BCDA took the position that the contract of Build-Transfer, the private operator of the airport at Pain Point (La Union), was binding and valid contract.

Thus, when the BOPP regional office of the said contract to issue appropriate clearances, the BCDA asked for those P60, simply to keep the pact running by presenting evidence between the warring Bulk Handlers and PHAC (the BCDA subsidiary in the Subic Bay area).

That's the only reason for the presence of the police force, according to Abaya.

For his part, the BCDA also could not order PHAC to back off, for instance, by recognizing the validity of the contract, thus allowing Bulk Handlers itself to continue to operate the port, because PHAC is independent from the BCDA.

But Bulk Handlers do for its 1 lessee, but that is still close to a business. And it doesn't because of the "influential person" who seemed to loot out the present operation despite the "binding and valid" contract. That is the bigger problem.

Now the PHAC president is Felix S. Rocco, the PHAC client is Mr. Leandro S. Mendoza, also a close chair of the BCDA. Guess what the "S" in both their middle names stands for?

And as despite the court cases, despite the order from Judge Robert Gerard of San Fernando, La Union, for the BCDA (and the PHAC) to stop interfering, apparently on a different operation in the airport—it's now clear, is happening.

From what I hear, former General Abaya wants to get a fighting chance in what is turning out to be a media war between him and Rocco for that last "Chest" Filipino, who recently lambasted Abaya over the Pinto Point issue.

By for bidding, I heard, is a P15.5 million PR campaign for the BCDA one year.

Meantime, the port is still not running. And as what do we have here—a seaport that's not running and a brand new airport, remind that's not being used? When do you think Mactan-Cebu will stop its finally?

Peso hits 6-month high ...

From page B1

markets like the Philippines, also amid the possibility of the US Federal Reserve raising its interest rates further.

From its closing rate of $1.68 on Tuesday the peso broke through the 10:31 barrier in morning trading in the Philippine Trading System and traded between an intra-day low of 34.97 and a high of 35.30 yesterday.

The peso, however, was stronger in 2005, but now gained by 4 percent since the start of the year and is close to retesting this year's peak of 33.68 posted in early March.

Gerardo Garcia, head of treasury at Banco de Oro Unibank, yesterday said foreign and local investors have regained a strong appetite for Philippine portfolio assets. "There is no perceived meltdown in the domestic economy.

"Investors are narrowing into the market. They are more constructive because political issues have died down, there's expectation of lower inflation and the government's bond rate change is expected to be successful," she said.

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Pool of retiring OFWs seen as significant economic force

STUDY shows the majority of Filipinos abroad intend to settle back in the country when they retire

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PHILIPPINES IS SEEN DETERMINED a potential gold mine with its large pool of overseas Filipino workers who intend to settle back in the country and could, thus, become a significant economic force in the future.

In a research presentation to the Apec group dated Aug. 2 entitled "OFW Economic Filipino workers' Remittances Returns, Impact, Contribution," Jeremy Frazier Undersecretary Romero Rewards said favorable global demographics would also likely sustain the strong inflows of OFW remittances to the country for the years ahead.

Rewards, the undersecretary at Bank of the Philippine Islands, stated that the majority of Filipino overseas intend to settle back in country when they retire and this could be a significant catalyst for growth in the future.

"What they choose to do when they come back can be an important driver of future economic growth," he said.

He cited a study of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) which says that the majority of Filipinos leaving for overseas employments some "only likely" to settle back in the country once they retire.

"This is the good news. When they come back, they bring in not only money but also skills and network to fuel the economy, as well as contribution to better governance and public life since they have seen how practices abroad," Rewards said, noting successful legislations, including Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. Co. Senator Pangilinan, who initiated the measure.

Rewards said the migration of workers back to country is due to the quality of domestic governance as the trend started long ago even when the country was ahead of its peers in the region.

"Renaissance per student is rising recently with the increasing number of professionals being deployed," he said.

In turn, remittances are making the Philippine economy more resilient to shocks that could otherwise affect growth, inflation, external accounts and employment.

In terms of employment, he estimates, he said the ratio of jobless (OFWs) have doubled to 20 percent from the current 10 percent if all OFWs stayed in the country.

"We make the point to the competitiveness here and overseas would likely prompt more workers to remain for overseas jobs, Rewards said.

In terms of profession, the study said nurses enjoy the highest premium abroad, earning 26 times more than what they could generate if they stayed in the country, also enjoying higher pays are medical technicians who can earn 10 times the local rates, computer programmers (5 times higher) and engineers (5 times higher).

Domestic helpers abroad are also substantially more than times more than the local peers. The scenario is similar for security guards, cooks and engineers.

Rewards said Filipinos had diversified geographic sources of remittances and inputs. Therefore, income is never tied to any one or handful of host countries.

In terms of remittance source, 35.6 percent of global remittances comes from Saudi Arabia, 10.4 percent from the rest of Middle East, 15 percent from the rest of Asia, 9.3 percent from the Europe, 9.2 percent from the United States and 4.4 percent from Japan, based on International Monetary Fund estimates.

Powdered coco milk exports up 442% in April

POWDERED COCONUT MILK WAS THE TOP world-traditional coconut product export last April with receipts hitting $536,218, to ship-ments total up 442 percent to 250 metric tons from year-ago level.

Preliminary data from the United Coconut Associations of the Philippines show that total shipments from 18 monitored export products totaled $1.1 million in April.

These products also include inedible coco, oil, pre-coconut oil, liquid coconut milk, multiplanes, coconut water, coconut chips, fresh coconut, frozen coconut meat and coconut vinegar.

Traditional coconut exports include coconut oil, copra meal, desiccated coconut and oleochemicals.

The Netherlands was the biggest buyer of coconut milk powder with 71 MT or 30 percent of all shipments. Other major destinations were the United States, Belgium, Italy, France, Hong Kong and Taiwan.

Total coconut exports generated $204.449 despite a 17-percent decline in volume. Japan remained the top market of nuts in stores, consuming 453 MT or 91.6 percent of the total.

The Netherlands was the biggest buyer of coconut milk powder with 71 MT or 30 percent of all shipments. Other major destinations were the United States, Belgium, Italy, France, Hong Kong and Taiwan.

Total coconut exports generated $204,449 despite a 17-percent decline in volume. Japan remained the top market of nuts in stores, consuming 453 MT or 91.6 percent of the total.

Philippine coconut oil posted revenues value of $242,496 although the volume dropped by 6 percent to 81 MT. The Americans are the bulk of the VCO shipments with 34 MT or 39.2 percent of total.

Exporters sold 367 MT of liquid coconut milk worth $228,621, but this volume meant a 29.5-percent decline. The United States bought 216 MT or 60.9 percent of all categories.

Molasses shipments shrank by 40 percent to 32 MT, yielding $62,740 in sales with 20 MT or 63.5 percent of the volume going to the United States.

Samuel R. Severino

Power supply enough to meet demand

Capacity seen able to support 5.7 percent economic growth

By Abigail L. Ho

THE COUNTRY HAS ENOUGH POWER TO meet future demand, according to state-run National Power Corp.

Our present power supply is more than adequate to meet the demand, and will be able to support the projected 5.7 percent growth in the economy," Napocor said in a statement.

Napocor made the statement after Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri said the government would "closely watch" the power sector and would invest in it to ensure a stable.

Cameron over stated that Mindanao would have a power shortage in 2006 to be followed by Luzon in 2011.

According to Napocor data, the country has an installed capacity of more than 12,000 megawatts (MW), more than enough to meet the peak demand of 6,788 MW forecast for the year.

In the Luzon grid, in particular, Napocor's generating plants have a total capacity of roughly 9,000 MW, which amply covers the estimated system peak demand of about 7,000 MW.

"In fact, among the three major grids, it is in Luzon where the power situation is the most sufficient, because most of the plants are located here," Napocor said.

Apart from Luzon grid, Napocor said long term measures were also being implemented in the Visayas and Mindanao grids to further improve the power supply situation there.

In the Visayas, these include modernizing the loading of the Leyte-Cebu submarine cable up to its rated capacity of 400 MW, energizing the full commissioning of the Panay diesel power plant 3 by the third quarter, and delivering the refurbishment of the Bohol diesel power plant pending the completion of interconnection projects in the area.

Iligan's Philippinen Corp. and Sultan Power Corp. are also putting up a 200-MW coal-based power facility in Cebu, which will be operational by 2013.

The Mindanao grid, for its part, is expected to get a big boost from the 255-MW Mindanao coal-fired power plant project, which had been scheduled for commissioning by January next year.

Power supply in the grid should also increase by 2007 with the completion of repair works on Napocor's 203-MW Pulangui IV hydropower plant. Another 66 MW of capacity will also be available from Agus II following the repair of its upstream flood control structures.

The 40-MW Mindoro hydropower project of Mirotin Energy Ventures in Oriental and the 54-MW Mt. Apo 3 geothermal project of the Philippine National Oil Co.-Energy Development Corp. are also up for completion in 2006 and 2008, respectively.

"In the long term however, we would still have to put in an additional capacity of about 1,000 MW in the Visayas by 2008, and another 27 MW in new capacities in Mindanao by 2009, to ensure adequate power supply in these two grids," Napocor said.

Neri said a major revision of the power, asset's energy program would be conducted in the next two weeks.

NORTHERN PALAWAN PRIME PROPERTIES

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+ 5 to 6 has. Boracay area. Excellent for resort development. 20M
+ 61 has. Big island located Western Busuanga. Surrounded by lush mangrove forest. Good for golf course, marina or retirement development.
Property name from: 20M
+ 21 has. Farm Land, Busuanga island. Bounded by river. 7.5M
+ 1.4 has. Beach Front, On East Busuanga island.
White sand. 2.5M
+ 14 has. On East Side of Busuanga Island. Good for resort. 15M
+ 2 has. West Busuanga Island. Good for small resort.
White sand beach. 2.5M
+ 1 ha. Coron Town. Good for residence or investment. 3.5M
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Palace likely to keep tariff rate structure

By Rainier P. Ontolgo

MALACAÑANG IS NOT EXPECTED TO RAISE (sic) (change the country's tariff regime as the government is set to launch its comprehensive review of duty rates, according to an official privy to the matter.

Tariff Commission chair Edgardo Abon said preliminary data showed that tariffs for 90 percent of tariff lines would not likely be changed.

"But there could be increases in certain tariff lines that cover raw materials and pharmaceutical products," he added. "Mid-increases could also be seen in a few tariff lines for finished products."

Abon said the technical working group (TWG) doing the review was expected to present its recommendations to Malacañang before the end of the year.

He declined to give further details.

Abon added that the realignment would not significantly affect government's tariff collections. would be "more or less revenue neutral."

"The new tariff regime would probably be good for three or four years although there was a move to make it five years," the official said. "We are refining our preliminary recommendations before we submit them for approval."

It was earlier reported that Malacañang was expected to keep import duties at current levels in the comprehensive review of tariffs. was initially up-beam and then trade representative Peter Favila ordered it on 20 July.

Officials have said a high-level TWG was looking at maintaining tariffs and holding the next review in 2009 or a year before Philippine takes effect under the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Free Trade Area or AFTA.

The position was a complete turnaround from advice being heeded when the comprehensive review started in 2004.

Back then, officials were considering to accelerate the brand increase of 3 percent to help raise revenues when President Macapagal-Arroyo submitted that the country was in a fiscal crisis.

This idea stemmed from the findings of a study that showed the country's most favored nation tariffs was the lowest in the region.

Finance wants tax amnesty applicants to file SALNs

By Michelle V. Rivera

THE DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE MAY RECommend the imposition of a revenue-enhancement measure that will require tax delinquents to submit their statements of assets, liabilities and networth (SALN) once every three years or they could avail themselves of amnesty.

In a draft position paper, the DOF said it could agree to a proposed tax amnesty program if the applicants would be required to regularly submit their SALNs.

The SALNs, the DOF said, would help ensure the fairness of Internal Revenue Tax payers database and, therefore, make it easier for the agency to trace tax delinquency cases in the future.

The department earlier expressed reservations over the move in the House to resolve the tax amnesty bill, which was filed in 2004 but was later shelved. Finance officials said implementing a tax amnesty program might create more problems than it could solve.

But the department said it was amenable to the tax amnesty proposal if the applicants would be required to regularly submit their SALNs to the BIR.

Tax amnesty programs in the past failed to collect substantial revenues as projected because applicants were not required to submit their SALNs, it said.

The plan to revive the tax amnesty bill was initiated by Sen. Ralph Recto, chair of the Senate committee on ways and means. Recto had sponsored the measure, but the bill was shelved until the 11th Congress.

It is intended to encourage delinquent taxpayers, especially those that the BIR is having difficulty of detecting, to come out in the open so the government would collect even a portion of their liabilities.

The draft bill states that individuals applying for amnesty will be required to pay only an amount equivalent to 25 percent of their networth as of December 2004 or P50,000, whichever is higher.

Gov't revenue goal set at ₱1.1T

Mirant pays ₱5B in taxes

Of the '07 target, ₱784 billion will come from BIR and ₱235 billion from Customs

By Michelle V Remo

THE DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE has set the national government's revenue target for next year at ₱1.1191 trillion, representing a 14.5-percent jump from this year's expected level.

This was based on expectations that existing revenue measures would continue to boost tax collection.

The target was also anchored on the assumption that the economy is measured by its gross domestic product, would grow by 5.7 percent in 2007 from the expected growth of 5.3 percent this year.

Of the total revenue target, the BIR is expected to contribute ₱784.1 billion, while the Bureau of Customs is seen raising ₱235.1 billion. Other revenue-collection agencies will contribute the balance.

The target for the BIR is 16.1 percent higher than its 2006 goal of ₱675.4 billion. This puts further pressure on the agency which is having difficulty meeting its 2006 target.

As of July, the BIR is ₱8 billion short of its seven-month target, collecting only ₱367.3 billion as against its ₱375.3-billion target.

However, it will not be held accountable for ₱56 billion of its ₱784-billion tax-collection program for next year. The amount represents the expected tax collection from tax-measure bills and bonds.

The BIR had said it should not be made liable for shortfalls in the revenue from government securities because collections depended on the issuance of bills and bonds issued by the Bureau of the Treasury.

The projected increase in the BIR's target for next year was partly based on the assumption that it would be able to raise collections of income and value-added tax.

Under the DOF's projections, income tax collection next year would grow by 15 percent to ₱454.3 billion because of the expected growth in the economy. Individuals are also expected to earn more, thus contributing higher income tax to the government.

Sales, excise and value-added taxes are expected to reach ₱519.3 billion next year, 20.8 percent higher than the ₱510.8 billion target for this year.

The ₱235.1-billion revenue target for the Bureau of Customs next year, which is 1.9 percent higher than this year's projected ₱197.6 billion, takes into account the expected growth in the country's imports.

From the projected $44,254 billion this year, import revenue is seen to rise by 10.8 percent to $48,857 billion next year.

Measures to improve tax collection include the use of third-party information, such as claims of corporate taxpayers, to check on the accuracy of the tax payments of the latter, docketing cases in the issuing/issuing of the BIR's computer auditing.

PRESIDENT Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo welcomes executives of the Philips Electronics group led by Royal Philips executive vice president Gerrit-Jan Dubbink (2nd from left) during a courtesy call at Malacañang. Gerrit-Jan and Philips Electronics Asia Pacific CEO Ad Scheepers (3rd from left) are in the country for the celebration of the 55th year of the company in the Philippines. With them is Philips Philippines CEO Mel Hazen (left). The Philips officials discussed with President Arroyo how Philips' lighting products could help Filipino consumers save energy.

Sale of sub-transmission assets to Sfelapco OKd

By Abigail L. Ho

AFTER A THREE-YEAR WAIT, SAN FERNANDO Electric Light and Power Corp. (Sfelapco) finally signed the deed of absolute sale for P224.6 million worth of National Transmission Corp. sub-transmission assets that it bought in January 2004, prompting it to spe another P50 million worth of similar assets.

After the signing of the deed of absolute sale yesterday, Transco president and chief executive Alan Ortiz said the state firm could finally move to five sub-transmission asset sale proceedings in the Sentinel Transco's.

Sfelapco paid the balance of the purchase price of more than P6 million on yesterday.

In a 17-page order dated March 15, the Energy Regulatory Commission approved the agreement covering the sale of the sub-transmission assets in Pampanga, particularly the Mexico-Malapez, Mexico-BRE and Mexico-Magsai lines, all rated at 69 kilovolts (kV).

The lines span 12.74 circuit-kilometers and will serve as power delivery lines for Sfelapco's San Fernando City franchise area.

Sfelapco senior vice president and general manager Jose Lacanlale said the distribution utility was now using the 36-circuit-kilometer 69-kV Magsai line, which was within its Floridablanca franchise area.

"But we still have to resolve issues with the sale of one of the line. Only 2 Pampanga Electric Cooperative (2) is shutting the line with us," he said.

He said it was possible that the two power distributors could put in a joint bid for the line.

Transco senior consultant Roque Corpuz said the Magsai line could not only serve as the main power line for Floridablanca, but also as an alternate line for Sfelapco's San Fernando franchise area.

The 36-circuit-kilometer Magsai line, he said, was estimated to be worth around P30 million.

Apart from the Sfelapco sale contract, the ERC had also approved Transco's purchase agreement with Cabanatuan Electric Corp. (Celco) for sub-transmission assets worth P11.16 million.

This was only the second such contract that the ERC had approved, out of the 32 that Transco had so far entered into.

Ortiz said Transco had submitted 17 completed contracts to the ERC. Of these, two had been approved, and another two were limited by the ERC.

ERC chair Rodolfo Albano Jr., he said, had committed to expedite the approval of the rest of the submitted contracts, to enable Transco to fulfill its mandate of divesting itself of its sub-transmission assets and functions.

No-gov't intervention policy on power firm sale probed

By Abigail L. Ho

THE JOINT CONGRESSIONAL POWER Commission yesterday warned the probe of Alsons-based Mirant Corp.'s claim that it did not need government consent to sell its Philippine assets and equity shares.

In a statement issued yesterday, JCPC exclusive and Lanao del Norte Rep. Abdullah Dalidig said this was quite worrisome for the government as Mirant's assets and shares would end up in the hands of financially capable but technically inadequate entities.

"This should be a matter for concern because this company is exiting the country, and it may just leave us with a legacy that we cannot rely on to run the facilities. Where that happens we would be in trouble," he said.

Dalidig said that in conducting its investigation, the congressional oversight committee took particular note of the assertion that National Power Corp. president Cyril del Callar got from Mirant chair and chief executive Edward Muller when asked to detail the manner by which it would divest its Philippine assets.

Muller, he said, had replied that the Philippine government's consent was no longer required to sell to the Mirant's assets here, because the "sale plan would be consummated in its Hong Kong Asia-Pacific unit."

He said the JCPC would also consider Napocor's proposal for it to involve its right to refuse to transfer the energy conversion agreements (ECAs) to whoever will win the bidding for Mirant's Philippine business.

"The committee would have to determine if the ECAs with Mirant are assignable to any party and if a breach of contract is not being committed in the process," he said.

Other issues that the JCPC would probe, he said, included Mirant's unresolved asset property cases, landlords and the independent power producer could pass on to its successor, and the welfare of Mirant Philippines' employees who were allegedly not being given a voice with regard to their separation packages.

Also on its to-scrutinized must-be possibility of Mirant's Philippine assets fetching a valuation high enough to trigger an increase in shareholder rates.

GOINGS-ON

Yellow Pages

DIRECTORIES PHILIPPINES Corp. said residential and institutional subscribers have until Sept. 15 to claim their 2006-2007 SPU Yellow Pages or any of its 15 business—Plus or any Blue Chip Series or Metro Manila.

The latest edition of the Yellow Pages does not only come in full color and with abundant features, it also has complementary electronic and mobile platforms which enhance its utility.

"Yellow pages always remains relevant for searching in the marketplace, and the Yellow Pages will always be focused on searching," he said," said DPC president Ricardo B. Bautista.

He said DPC also is keeping pace with its enterprise and mobile counterparts by terms of innovations to enhance the search experience.

2006 CEO Excel Awards

TOP-LEVEL MANAGERS whose outstanding entrepreneurship skills helped achieve business and organizational objectives will be recognized in the 2006 CEO Excellence Commendation Excellence in Organizations Awards to be held in early December.

The International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) Philippines said this week the local counterpart of the world IABC is set to honor outstanding CEOs, presidents or senior executives during IABC's annual conference in the United States or Canada.

The 2006 CEO Excel Awards will be formally launched at the IABC general membership meeting and forum at the 25th floor of Ayala Tower 1, on Ayala Avenue, Makati City.

Officials urge local vegetable farmers not to relax despite collapse of WTO talks

By Delmar Cariño
Inquirer Northern Luzon

LA TRINIDAD, BENGUET—THE collapse of trade talks of the World Trade Organization (WTO) is a blessing for the local vegetable industry.

But industry leaders have told farmers that the frantic quest for the unabated entry of foreign vegetables was far from over.

Board Member John Kim said farmers must still guard against the impact of bilateral trade pacts on agriculture and the continuing importation of foreign vegetables in processed form.

Kim, who represented Benguet in the 13th ministerial conference of the WTO in Hong Kong in December last year, cited the country's trade agreements with China and other Asian countries, and the importation of vegetables in frozen, dried, shredded or sliced form.

He said the recent WTO talks collapse saved local vegetables from tariff reduction, lifting of import quotas and unlimited access supposed to be imposed by foreign products under a free trade system.

"But bilateral agreements still pose a threat to local vegetables," Kim said, citing as example the Early Harvest Program (EHP) the country signed with China that called for trade liberalization.

"The danger is that there is no mechanism provided for dispute resolution in bilateral agreements in case a trade conflict will arise," he said.

Kim said the country's quarantine law also needed to be amended because it allowed the importation of processed vegetables into the country in frozen or dried form can be exploited by unscrupulous," he said.

Processed vegetables, he said, should also undergo pest risk analysis.

Kim, chair of the provincial board's agriculture committee, disagreed with engineers of the Bureau of Plant Industry who said that bacteria would not thrive in imported vegetables frozen at less than 18 degrees.

"Congress should give more teeth to our quarantine law by imposing stricter requirements for imported processed vegetables," he said.

BADA will not stop this vegetable crusher from bringing its cargo to market.

OLD MAN POWER. Rafi Jon wearing is just one of the various trades common among Bigans.

Japan gov't tightens quarantine requirements for RP mangoes

Consumers concerned about chemicals, local exporters say

By Jeffrey M. Tupas
Inquirer Mindanao

DAVAO CITY—THE JAPANESE government has tightened its quarantine requirements for Philippine mangoes as residue from synthetic chemicals has become a major concern at Japanese consumers, a mango exporter-company official said.

"This move has resulted in lesser volumes of Philippine fresh mangoes in Japan, whereas the country's most lucrative foreign market, during the past two years," said Mina Carlos, export and procurement manager of the Davao-based Brunei Bay Corp.

Based on data from mango exporting companies, the Philippines shipped mangoes to Japan for 5,930 kilograms in 2004.

In 2005, it went down to 5,864 kg.

This year, the Philippines only managed to export 4,164 kg of mangoes to the top economy.

And as if the stricter quarantine were not bad enough, many South American countries have started conquering the lucrative Japanese market, according to Wako Iwatsi, manager of Dole Philippines.

Javier said Mexico and Brazil's fresh mango exports to Japan were "ruling quite a bit since the Philippines' total share of the market."

"The Japanese government is also set to allow fresh mango shipments from India very soon," Javier added.

Mango is a major Philippine fruit, coming in third to banana and pineapple in terms of export volume and value.

The Philippines is the sixth biggest mango-producing country producing about one million metric tons a year.

It accounts for 3.1 percent of the world's production.

Javier said the Philippine mango industry should enhance the quality of its products and implement efforts to protect the country's market share.

The Mindanao Economic Development Council (Medco) said China was emerging as a good market for Philippine fresh mangoes, but like Japan, it was also adopting new quarantine rules.

Early this year, the Chinese government started to require export treatment (VHT) for fresh mango shipments from the Philippines.

But the process would entail an additional cost of at least $0.40 a kilo and would make Philippine mangoes more expensive to Chinese consumers at the retail level.

Several mango grower organizations have already urged the Department of Agriculture (DA) to negotiate with the Chinese government for a mutually acceptable quarantine treatment procedure for fresh mango shipments.

Demand test has begun on the fruit of a mango VHT plant in Carmen town in Davao del Norte. The HOT plant, the second such facility to be established in Mindanao, is expected to start commercial operations next month.

Strengthening Mindanao exporters

AFTER OPENING FILIPINO WORKers, local importers of agricultural products, home furnishing, electronics and information technology services, among others, are the country's new major source of foreign exchange.

In Mindanao, exports rose 21 percent in the first quarter of 2006 to $302 million from the previous year's level of $249 million.

This was largely due to the increases in the export values of Mindanao's major products, including coconut oil, fresh pineapples, nickel ore and cultivated oysters.

But despite the significant growth, there is still much room for improvement considering the competition posed by neighboring countries.

This was one of the key messages that came out of the recent export conference of Mindanao Trade, Industry and Investment Council (MTIC) officials discussed on priority sectors, including agriculture and fruits, mining, tourism and IT.

Issues and concerns

Critical issues discussed during the congress were lack of financial assistance to small exporters, unfavorable economic weighing on the ICT industry, inadequate infrastructure and telecommunications development, heavy tariffs and taxes, and the dearth of market penetration strategies.

Financing was a particularly serious concern affecting the fruits, tourism and other resource-based export sectors.

Sought to be addressed were certain government requirements, high interest rates and lack of financial support for capital investments.

Marketing was also stressed, due to lack of port harvest facilities, inadequate processing and cold storage facilities, lack of fish quality control laboratories, insufficient infrastructure and investments on telecommunications and licensure safety, limited access of public telecommunications services, and absence of an accredited building to accommodate ICT-related businesses.

The spiraling cost of doing business was also a major concern considering the high cost of freight charges, inadequate and dragging road blockades as landmarks of private roads to the low cost, the cumbersome rules and stringent export and import documentation procedures.

MINDANAWORLD

Joji Rogero-Bisnar

Development issues

Product development and marketing were also mentioned, the challenges being the need to diversify and adopt new technologies; need to improve quality; inadequate research and development programs in the region and improper post harvest; lack of strong marketing organization or consolidation; narrow export market; weak branding or absence of brand or institutional packet for fresh and frozen runs; lack of investment promotion and tax incentives; high tariffs of the United States and the European Union (EU) on canned runs; insufficient EU quota allocation for canned tuna; exports of EU FMD on canned runs and import ban on shredded tilapia in Japan.

Tuna concerns included the need to have two classifications for tuna in the region, the canned and the fresh-chilled.

They must have separate rules and regulations given their difference, experts said.

The Filipino tuna sector is also threatened by the foreign players who receive incentives such as tax-free access, whereas the local tuna is slapped a 5% percent tax.

On the ICT concerns, several exporters were complaining about the tedious process of securing intellectual property rights in Manila.

They have proposed that the IPO establish a desk at the DTI office.

Exporters reported that it was of no use to patent products outside the Philippines, but this would not provide them enough protection.

The insufficient support due to budget constraints of the Bureau of Fisheries was highlighted, as its budget is lumped together with the other bureaus of the Department of Agriculture.

The private sector in Mindanao also recommended the latter implementation of the project to expand the Makar Wharf at General Santos.

This would enable the region to accommodate big foreign vessels to berth.

Second amendments

At the forum, committees from the key government agencies, including the DA, Department of Trade, Environment, Transportation and Communications, Public Works and Local Government, Philippine Coconut Authority were created.

The DTI plans to organize a financing forum for outdoor organizations with the National Livelihood and Support Fund to facilitate access to financing.

To intensify product promotion and marketing strategies, DTI would conduct trade fairs, investment trade fairs/missions, identify OFW associations to help promote and distribute region's products, participate in national and international food expo (Japan and Taiwan) and conduct market dialog and matching.

Related line agencies would also work together to strengthen human resources by way of training and technology transfer; and they are considering mobile vans to service the remote areas.

Under the ICT sector, Web and data connection for farmers access, and additional telephone systems would be provided to address the telecommunication development issues.

DTI and DOST would also assist in developing competitive products by promoting innovation and utilization of market intelligence, providing training/collaboration services to clients and firms, and giving technical assistance.

These plans mean that there is still much to do before Mindanao can hold on to its future.

Lloyd Ngan Sian is co-advocate for Mindanao, chair, Mindanawworld Foundation Inc; ComCom and Charter change Advocacy Commission member; chair of the Mindanao TWIT; Mindanao Rep, Export Development Council; chair, Joji Rogero Foundation; former chair of the Mindanao Business Council. Email comments to publisher2@yahoo.com)

DBP
Development Bank of the Philippines

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Security Stock	Quantity	Approved Budget for Contract of Purchase (ABC) per Lot	Cost of Bid Documents
Straight vs Clone	10,000 units	P 60,000.00	P 500.00
Hybrid Pioneer Stock (Continuous Flow)	60,000 pieces	P 720,000.00	P 500.00
SOCO Stocks (Continuous Flow)	1,000,000 pieces	P 1,410,000.00	P 1,000.00

Note: received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at the Opening

Mode of Delivery Payment: Staggered Delivery/Progressive Billing
Schedule of Activities

Particulars	Date	Venue
Pre-Bidding Conference	September 1, 2006 (Thursday) at 9:00 a.m.	8th Floor, DBP Building, Makati City
Submission of Eligibility Requirement Documents, Technical and Financial Proposals	"Do not before" 9:00 a.m. of September 15, 2006 (Tuesday)	BAC Secretariat 8th Floor, DBP Building, Makati City
Opening of Eligibility Requirement Documents, Technical and Financial Proposals/Prospective Bidders are encouraged to attend this activity)	September 15, 2006 (Tuesday) at 2:30 p.m.	8th Floor, DBP Building, Makati City

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures as specified in the RPA of R.A. 9184, and is restricted to Filipino citizens or organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest belonging to citizens of the Philippines and shall have been authorized to engage in the following Licensed Printing Businesses for at least three (3) years. Security Check Printer should present sample check items with MICR encoding duly tested and certified to have passed the Philippine Clearing House Corporation (PCHC) MICR reader sorter. Only those manufacturers selected for eligibility shall be invited to bid. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall undergo the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine the responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during post-qualification procedure.

Interested bidders may download these forms at www.devbankphil.com.ph and at the Electronic Procurement Service of the Department of Budget and Management. Prospective bidders may secure the bid documents and Eligibility Requirement Forms from the BAC Secretariat, 8th Floor, DBP Building, Makati City, upon payment of a non-refundable fee depending on the total amount of the approved budget of the contract of a particular items the prospective bidder intends to bid. Only those who purchased the bid documents will be allowed to attend the pre-bidding conference on September 7, 2006.

The Development Bank of the Philippines reserves the right to reject any and all bids, annul the bidding process, or not award the contract at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

For further inquiries, please call telephone numbers 818-9511 loc. 2610.

Bids and Awards Committee

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LIFESTYLE

Edite Chelo Baraki-Perueva

IN THIS ISSUE

- Cooking class in faraway Barcelona /D1
- Cool comfort food from Margarita Fores /E1

Good enough to eat

THE CUPCAKE AND FOOD for the gods photos last week caused quite a stir. The cupcakes "seem to pop out, [the photos] are so tastefully done, so organic" were some comments. Marra Agustin even said "ang sarap nuwan ng food for the gods." Even without tasting it!

For the pictures match a thousand words, but that may not take all the credit!

For never done a picture column until today. When I saw Lori's blog, I felt spot to share her photos would be robbing the world of such great talent and that would be unfair!

To me, my food shots reveal those of Nigella Lawson, Jamie Oliver and Martha Stewart. Such genuine Pinoy talent!

When I asked Lori to describe her work, she said: "I am a food lover who loves breakfast, eclairs, photography and bakeshop food. My artistic is my photos for my passion..."

And in the many years, as it has for years... Love and passion, dedication and devotion, everything spells passionate! Visit: dessertlist.blogspot.com.

Lori is a professional food writer and her essays on food on her site are mesmerizing. She is not a professional food photographer or stylist, but perhaps you and I could count her into becoming one. I am pulling Lori on the spot!

Undecided

I am Pinoy, BBM [hotel] and restaurant management student. I like to know my options after school. I don't know what path to take, or her what to do. I like cooking but I am more inclined toward arts and styling. I would like to be a food photographer, after my duty. I have a simple digital camera. Can I work with just that? What would you advise?

Sorry for my very late reply. I could not answer this by myself. I take photos, and they are exceptional—according to me! I haven't taken any interior photos.

The others know what can give you have superb equipment. Never come across a food photo hobbyist need Lori came along. I took the library of asking her the questions.

She says: "I don't feel qualified to answer these questions, but here are my answers based on what I do when I take photos:

* Look for an angle that puts the food at its luscious best. A food shot should screen the food's richest delicacies.

* Attempt to capture food in natural light. I never use flash or artificial lights. It gives a unpleasant, cold cast of food to the shot. Food shots should pop out, look delicious, and make the viewer want to lick the photo.

* Set up the food to be in natural setting—i.e. a nice table post well with a cup of steaming coffee, dim lights look good with it's nice and other dim area in the background, etc. Food should look clean and your setup should reflect that.

* Advice from one amateur to another: Know your camera well and shoot in natural light. I am a Canon PowerShot G2, a point-and-shoot cam with manual settings. Not long

FOOD photos by Lori Baltazar, who describes herself as "a food lover who likes, breakfast, eclairs, photography and bakeshop food."

like taking pictures.

My new class schedules are out. Call 5566(DM or 9227868.

E-mail the author at inquirer@inquirer.com.ph

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A. LIPIN — BY JES AGUEDA

BABY BLUES — BY JERRY SCOTT

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NUTS — BY PATRICK MCDONNELL

LOVEBONITE — BY ELIZABETH CHOMKO

ATOMO AND WEBBY — BY LINA GARCELLANO

DIVINE COMEDY — BY STEVEN MANALOSI

KIKO MACHINE — BY MARK ABREN

HOROSCOPOMOS — BY JOHNS TEJERO

TULOSOK — BY NAPOLEON TATUM PHILIPPE BLAC

BEN — BY DANIEL SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD

HOROSCOPE

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku — by Dave Green

	6					4		
	2						1	9
7			8	9				
			1		9	6		
		8	2		3	5		
		5	6		8			
				6	1			4
1	4						9	
		2					7	

Difficulty Level ★★★

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and prog are at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

7	2	9	6	5	8	1	4	3
6	3	1	4	7	9	8	2	5
4	5	8	1	3	2	7	6	9
2	9	4	3	8	6	5	1	7
8	1	7	9	4	5	6	3	2
3	6	5	2	1	7	4	9	8
9	8	6	5	2	1	3	7	4
5	7	3	8	9	4	2	5	6
1	4	2	7	6	3	9	8	1

Ham kiosk at new mall

PLAZA Premium Baked Ham with choice of sauces

THE PLAZA PREMIUM BAKED HAM IS NOW available at SM Mall of Asia.

The Filipino fare ham, made from a 40-year-old family recipe by The Plaza's gourmet chefs, is available at Hamtokiosk at the Mall of Asia. It may be topped with a choice of sauces—Premium Glaze, Natalie Sauce, Sweet Mustard and Zesty Garlic and served with freshly baked danish or whole wheat pan de sal.

Cured in a special formula then lightly wood-smoked with **assorted herbs and spices, and oven-baked and glazed**, the ham is also available as whole leg and half, suitable as gift for special occasions.

You may also get some sliced pieces to take home at The **Plaza Premium Baked Ham Kiosk**, LT 102, G/F Seaview mezzanine Mall, SM Mall of Asia, Pasay City. Call 7289000.

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Savings account suitable for small bank depositors

By Linda B. Bolido

A FEW MONTHS AGO, BEE JOSEPHA, banking is easier not with a line of cheque book clients have to pay for using automated teller machines, even just to find out their accounts' balances. The rates ranged from P5 to P15.

So we pointed out in an earlier edition, the rates charged by banks for **ATM** use often exceeded the interest earned by their savings accounts.

Depositors also know that banks impose so many charges that people find their accounts dwindling in nothing for seemingly no reason. People who thought they were being prudent by not touching their savings account found that, instead of their money growing, it had actually shrunk because of bank service charges.

And, of course, many banks not only require high initial deposits but they also **set minimum-ing balances. Depositors** are charged if their accounts fall below **that amount.**

For ordinary-wage earners, it is basically **just the convenience and security** of using the ATM that make them put **their money to the bank. Otherwise, we** would probably see more people going back to the old practice of keeping their money in old socks.

But now Citibank Savings, an affiliate of Citibank, N.A. and a member of Citigroup, has come up with **Peso-Peeked Savings** account, all those **who seek the most** reasonable alternatives to current banking practices, particularly **ordinary wage**earners who must **make every peso** count, will probably **be glad to hear about** its winning features: low initial deposit, no maintaining balance, no ATM transaction fees and interest rate as high as five percent per year.

Peeso Savings gives depositors access to over 6,000 ATMs nationwide via the Honeybee, Mebank and Expressnet networks.

Unfortunately, at the moment, there are still only a few Citibank savings **branches. But other** branches are set to open soon.

For information, call Ayala Avenue

The Consumer

Paseo de Roxas, the flagship branch, at 8737371, 8410256, 8128057, 8183344, 8128015, 8173314.

Mobile telemarketing

Has telemarketing moved into the realm of mobile communication? I got a **text message from somebody who** said she was with Chinatrust Bank. She was offering some service called "Salary Stretch Program." When I asked how she got my mobile number, she did not reply.

That is worrisome. It is bad enough that on any given day you get all sorts of calls on your landline with special offers and "deals" that they think you can't refuse. But if they are also starting to move into mobile communications, then any hopes of privacy may be totally lost.

Expiration date

Reader Michelle Cruz wanted to know if snack packages were required to carry expiration dates. She said Jack & Jill products did not have the information. "UBC store place manufacturing date and expiration date for the safety of consumers."

Responding for UBC, Vinova S. Siegers, JG Summit Holdings Inc. corporate communications manager, said "upon coded manufacturing and expiry dates are not required for snacks." She said information on requirements such as this were available at the website of the Bureau of Food and Drugs...www.bfad.gov.ph.

But she added, "Please rest assured that Universal Robina Corporation... is conscientiously adhering to the high standards of quality and safety such that we have maintained throughout our 50 years. For more information, please check www.urc.com.ph."

The regular columnist, Michelle T. Gon, is indisposed. Please send letters to The Consumer Lifestyle Section, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Ave. cor. Makati-ti and Yague Sts., Makati City, PO Box 2103 Makati Central Post Office, 1260 Makati, or e-mail lbolido@inquirer.com.ph.—Editor

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Ice cream without the guilt

KERBY MANANQUIL and Fabella Dulce Tantan go wild over their favorite indulgence: Selecta Lite Cookies and Cream

TWO OF THE GIRLS, former fashion models, Bobby Blanzuela and Valerie Jose Bunkis, are fun loving, down-to-earth young people who take delight in such simple pleasures as a scoop of good old ice cream.

Both discovered by renowned designer Inno Soriano, Blanzuela and Dr. Joe Sandoval were appointed as consultants to fashion shows and ads.

But despite the distinct glitter and hard workers' quirks in their professions, these girls do get carbo-conscious to relax and pamper themselves. One of their favorite treats? Ice cream.

And being such ice cream aficionados, it's no wonder they're both excited by the all-new Selecta Lite Ice Cream—it light, low-fat and low-sugar version of their favorite indulgence.

"It's great that we can enjoy our favorite ice cream flavors with delecta Lite without worrying about the calories," says Joe Ice Sandoval, whose favorite flavor is Double Dutch. Blanzuela, on the other hand, assures us all.

"Cookies 'n Cream only lives Rocky Road is out of my list! moments of new events. But I'm also going with Double Dutch, since it has the best chocolate and vanilla of the same time."

Jake Manangil and Dulce Santos, ice cream enthusiasts everywhere else, indulge their cravings with the new Selecta Lite. It's 95 percent fat free and has 95 percent less sugar, so it's easy to please your ice cream lover—without the guilt.

A SCOOP of Selecta Lite's Very Rocky Road ice cream is a chippy cone is one of Debra Sanchez favorite treats.

Sterling silver anniversary concert

GISNET Yang, trailblazer of food franchising in the Philippines, is also a cause.

MCDONALD'S CELEBRATES ITS 35th anniversary with "A Sterling Night of Music," a dinner concert on Sept. 9 at the Makati Shangri-La.

The dinner concert is a fund-raiser for McDonald's Charities. Its charity arm of McDonald's that promotes the rights of Filipino children to education.

Accompanied by a 35-piece orchestra under the baton of musical director Lucien Salonga, McDonald's Philippines president and chair George T. Yang will perform opera pieces and contemporary hits.

Other performers are singer-actor RONNIE McDONALD, children's Theatre Queen Bubble Gang cast members (in partnership with the Department of Social Welfare and Development and local government units), Bright Minds Choral Program and McDonald's World Children's Day.

Aside from McDonald's, "A Sterling Night of Music" is also sponsored by Coca Cola Export Corporation. Other sponsors are MEGAWIDE, SMA 7, SOS Philippines, Bonby Chicken, Hart Food Services and Getron. Gold sponsors are Globe Quipol, SOS, Mobility and Technohaus.

Tickets are at P5,000 each. A table of 10 costs P50,000. Call 6342768.

LIFESTYLE

TRADITIONAL Catalan sausages are sold at La Boqueria food market near the bustling street of La Rambla.

SPANISH chef Pau Quco teaches tourists to learn and discover the secrets of Catalan cuisine, its ingredients and origins.

Lessons on the wonders of Catalan cuisine

Attending a cooking class is a unique opportunity to learn first-hand that simplicity is the secret of Barcelona's traditional specialties

Text and photos by Margie Biggs-Reyes

WITH FOOD BEING A major tourist draw, Barcelona, the second largest city in Spain and the Catalan capital, has become one of the country's most popular destinations. In fact, Singapore Airlines now flies to the Catalan capital three times a week via Singapore.

Catalan cuisine offers a range of gastronomic wonders to delight the palate. The region's cooking may be divided into two distinct types. People living in the mountains and hinterland use a lot of meat and sausages, dairy products, game and meats, events. Coastal areas use mainly seafood, often accompanied by rice and vegetables.

To discover the secrets of traditional Catalan cuisine, its ingredients and origin, one can enroll in interactive cooking classes.

"For people who love to travel and cook, here is an opportunity to combine both passions while in Barcelona," says Clara Aleñikon, Catalonia tourism director for international sourcing.

"Attending a cooking class here is a

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CATALAN markets showcase the quality and richness of the region's produce like eggs, vegetables, fruits...

... seafood, meat...

...and nuts that change with the seasons.

Lessons on the wonders of Catalan cuisine

From page D1

unique opportunity to understand the essence of traditional homemade specialties of Catalan cuisine," he says.

Cook and Taste is a cooking cabinet cooking school that regularly gives afternoon classes. Spanish chef Ina Gasco conducts classes in an elegant yet practical kitchen, with a gorgeous private island that can accommodate up to 16 students.

One side of the room has a huge glass window overlooking the busy street of La Rambla, while the other side has a storage closet and freezer filled with veggies, meats and more.

Gasco promises his guests "you will be creating some of the most delicious, yet simple dishes we have to Catalonia."

Empenadas de Bacalao (Cod Salad), Fideuá de Fideos (Browned Noodles) and Crema Catalana (Catalan Cream) are some of the dishes that keep students of the class to boot class busy.

Olive oil, Gasco says, is one of the main ingredients in Mediterranean cuisine.

SEAFOOD is used in many Catalan traditional dishes, like Empanadas de Bacalao or cod salad.

"We just can't live without olive oil," adds the chef, who gives her instructions in English. He spices up the session with a little background on the rich history and culture of the food and the ingredients.

"To know the kind of olive oil that you're getting, read the label," he says. "If it says *oli d'oliva verge* (virgin olive oil), that means the oil is of premium quality and natural. If the word *oliva* is there, it means that the oil has a maximum acidity content of 0.8 percent, which guarantees its quality. If refined (refinat) is there, it means the oil has been treated [not fully] suitable for consumption."

Gasco prepares cod salad to emphasize seafood is part of Catalans' traditional diet. Catalonia, with its seafaring culture, has always made the most of the resources of the Mediterranean.

As for meat, most of the concepts in Catalonian are made from pork. Cerdito, made with lamb and very popular in the winter, is among the few exceptions.

Crema Catalana, artfully arranged on a plate, is similar to crème brûlée. Gasco says, "Crema Catalana is easier to misrepresent than it is no longer possible or even it is a popular breakfast."

Originally, it was a traditional dessert on the feast of Saint Joseph, March 19. Women in the family—saints, grandmothers or unmarried sisters—prepared it. Its name Crema Catalana is easier to misrepresent than it is no longer possible or even it is a popular breakfast."

Originally, it was a traditional dessert on the feast of Saint Joseph, March 19. Women in the family—saints, grandmothers or unmarried sisters—prepared it. Its name comes from the custom of serving round as dessert at almost any meal. It is served in small earthenware dishes with burnt, caramelized sugar on top.

Typical

Gasco concludes the session by saying Catalan food usually prepared at home is not restaurant. It is made by mastering a piece of toasted bread, rubbing it with a tomato cut in half, drizzling it with extra-virgin olive oil and then adding a pinch of salt. It is eaten with home-produced pork sausages.

Gasco says the simplicity of this dish is not really representative of the richness of the region's cuisine, but it is traditional and special to the Catalans.

IBA flies to Barcelona three times weekly (Monday, Wednesday, Friday evenings) via the ultra-modern Boeing 777-200 ER. Biz-minded Bengal Air flight bookings and information call 7566899 in Manila, 2325211 in Cebu or 2225666 in Davao. Check on promotional airfares at ibagairways.com

E-mail the author at ebagas@inquirer.com.ph

CHEF Ignacio cooks browned noodles with fish seafood in a large paella pan.

CREMA Catalana, served in small earthenware dish with burnt, caramelized sugar on top

Empenadas de Bacalao (Cod Salad)

- 350g of salted cod
- 1 spring onion
- ½ red pepper
- ½ green pepper
- 50g black olives
- 50g green olives
- 100g black olive paste
- 20g capers
- 2 anchovies
- ½ olive oil
- Salt

Soak the salted cod in cold water for three days, changing water every day. Squeeze it and break it into little pieces. Chop the onion and both peppers finely. Mix them in a bowl together with the rest and both kinds of olives. Dress with olive oil and salt to taste.

In a different bowl, mix the black olive paste with the capers and anchovies. Add a little olive oil and blend.

Spray the bread and toast it with the mixture resulting from the blending.

Fideuá de Fideos (Browned Noodles)

- 350g calamar, peeled
- 150g langoustine or monk fish
- 350g clams
- 1 onion, chopped
- 2 or 3 cloves of garlic
- 2 red tomatoes, peeled, chopped
- 100ml olive oil
- 400g noodles (angel hair)

Fish stock (double the volume of the noodles)

Heat the large pan. Fry noodles and the stirred oil, garlic, peeled, and fry them until they are brown. Set aside.

Heat oil in the same pan and fry the onions until slightly browned. Transfer to plate and set aside.

Fry the slightly chopped calamar the same heat oil. Add salt. After a few minutes, add the tomato and fry over medium heat.

When the tomato starts to leave, stir in the onion that you fried before. Add the carrot and bring this a boil. After two or three minutes, stir in the noodles and distribute them evenly. Add the shrimp and distribute the fish and other seafood evenly. Noodles can't be touched but beyond this point.

Increase the heat from medium to high and cook for at least five minutes, rotating and switching the pans to distribute the heat evenly. Reduce heat to minimum and cook at least another three minutes.

Let it stand for about two minutes before serving.

Crema Catalana (Catalan Cream)

- 6 egg yolks
- 200g sugar
- 1 liter milk
- 60g starch
- Lemon peel
- 1 stick cinnamon
- Vanilla (optional)

Blend egg yolks and sugar producing a fine cream. Add 150ml of milk and stir to get a good mixture. Add lemon peel and cinnamon. Heat it over medium-high heat in a saucepan.

Meanwhile, dissolve starch (60g) in remaining milk and stir the mixture into the saucepan.

Bring tea boil, stirring all the time and set aside right before it boils. Let boil for a while, still stirring and distribute into a little six! Remove dishes before it completely cools down.

Showcase of Asian cooking

QUEENS CRYSTAL GARDEN RESTAURANT offers various authentic Indian cuisine, tandoor dishes from Indonesia and Singapore, as well as Asian fusion. Its international dishes have come up with a menu consisting of 1500 dishes, of which 80 are pure vegetarian. Indian food lovers can try Vegetable Tandoor Kapitoom, Chicken Anarkali Pizza, Stealth Kebab Mutton, Mini Filet, among others. Other dishes are Regular Jodi, Mutton Vindaloo, Chicken Patiala, Grilled Dry Masala Fish, Shrimp Hariyala Masala, Fish Tikka and Shrimp Achaari. Vegetarian specialties include Pakneer Bhut, Chutney Masala or Vegetable Manchurian. Queens carries a wide selection of wines. Queens Crystal Garden Restaurant is at 146-B Jupiter Street. It operates daily 11:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. and 6:00-10:30 p.m. and also delivers. Call 890 6118 or 890 6119.

DINING OUT

EL CORREGIDOR, one of Manila's Spanish restaurants, has moved to Paseo de Magallanes, in the back of the Magallanes Commercial Center. The restaurant, which is celebrating its 31st anniversary, serves traditional Spanish dishes that have graced a modern flair. Specialties include Roast Suckling Pig or Cochinillo Asado. It was voted one of the 100 by the late Leandro P. del Rosario, when she first opened in Remedios in Adriatico Street, Manila.

SAKAE SUSHI presents *kamitsuke*, offerings chosen at random, shaken or lightly served with tea, sea rice, mushrooms, lettuce and onion salads. Made in Japanese ceramic pot bar, instead of the traditional stone pot, modern *kamitsuke* is suited to expectations of proper pot or white or off-white colors.

Eskan Santa Rosa Crossroad West Park, Global City and Makati Ayala Paseo City. Call 8454851 or 8456452.

MANDARIN ORCHID, 5 The Tasti presents "Gluten Lover and Mushrooms" food promo, a la carte lunch and dinner menu. Sept. 5-10. It features gluten-free menu and fresh mushrooms. Dishes include Truffle infused Braised Duck Terrine with Green Bean Tempura, Mikkonen's Salad with Pan-fried Bonito Liver and Sautéed Chanterelles, Cream of Nori Crab with Tempura Mushroom Powder. Traditional Beef Tenderloin Rossini or Grilled Portobello Mushroom with Sautéed Spinach and Mushroom Croquette, Pan-fried Pigeon Breast or Sautéed Bacon Bites and Trio of Mushrooms and Duck Liver Mousseline. Call 8188888 local 7811 to 7822.

INTERCONTINENTAL HOTEL 5 Cafe Jeremy presents a la carte menu of different types of Asian fare. Selections include the traditional Duck Roast Kaldereta, Salmon Kaldereta and a vegetarian-style Veal Kaldereta. Cafe Jeremy is open daily, 6 a.m. -12 midnight. It serves breakfast, lunch and dinner buffets. Call 8150111.

THE MANOR NORTH EDSA opened a new branch at 2000 Roosevelt corner Ilang St. in Project 8, Quezon City. Manila, with young actors Maja Salvador, Dino Guevarra and Pietro Guevarra guests. Also present were Manila Councilor Robert Ortega who led the ribbon-cutting ceremony. The new branch is open daily 9 a.m.-9 p.m. Other Manor Republic branches are in Makati and QC. New branches will open soon in Pasay City and Tagaytay, QC. For delivery, call 716 6666 (MANOR).

LA MESA GRILL at SM Mall of Asia offers authentic Filipino dishes. It serves lechon with six different dips or dressings: garlic, orange-infused, Mang's choice, spicy pork liver, curry mayonnaise or sweet chili. Appetizers include Kilawing with Chorizo, Halaan a la Pobre, Boodong ng Garlic Bangus, Tiange's Bulong, Tinapa Roll, Lumpiang Sariwa and Sari-Saring Pampagana priced at P195. Pinoy favorites include Kare-kare, Beef Kaldereta, Relleno, among others. Call 8365111.

QUEEN Crystal Garden Restaurant's Tandoori Capsicum

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Micky Javier

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TWO FLAVORS IN ONE Cordoba's Double Delights: Leaves combines ube and cheese, and chocolate and mocha. The Sarbeds Ubaldones and Cheesy Twist may be enjoyed as breakfast bread or snack. The chocolate ripple and mocha marble loaf combines the decadent taste of chocolate and the goodness of rich mocha. Visit Cordoba Double Delights (the ube and cheese and chocolate and mocha loaf) you can have fresh and delicious bread that may also be cheaply stock.

Easy bean recipes

EASY COOK PEAS AND BEANS ARE RICH IN FIBER AND PROTEIN, essential components of a healthy diet. They are available in three varieties: Great Northern Beans, Red Kidney Beans and Pinto Beans. Here are some easy to do recipes using Easy Cook Peas and Beans.

Beany Burgers

- ½ cup/ml unprocessed Easy Cook Great Northern Beans
- 500 g ground beef
- 2 tbsp Worcestershire sauce
- ½ a ground onions
- ½ Australia Herbed Rolled Oats
- 2 tbsp ketchup
- ½ a Sulfur
- 1 egg
- 2 x flour for dredging
- Salt and pepper to taste

Combine all ingredients in a glass bowl and gently blend till firm. Chill the mixture 1 hr in the refrigerator. Form into patties and dredge in flour. Lay flat on greased baking sheet and bake at 350°F/shredded till done. You can also fry them like you would burgers.

Beany Lumpia

- 2 x Easy Cook Red Kidney Beans
- ½ a ground pork
- 1 tbsp soy sauce
- ½ Alcohol cube
- ½ a green onion leaves, chopped
- ½ a flour
- Lumpia wrappers

Boil beans until tender then drain well. Combine all other ingredients in a glass bowl and blend. Chill for about 30 minutes. Fill lumpia wrappers with the mixture. Heat oil and deep fry until golden brown.

Beany dips

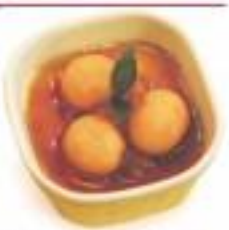
- Boiled beans can be used in hummus variety. You may use any other beans of similar size if you cannot find the type called for in a recipe.
- To prevent water from foaming when cooking dried beans, add 1 tbsp of vegetable oil to the water.
- Boiled beans triple in volume so they cook, cook sure to choose sufficient casserole or pan.

For more information and recipes, write to The Marketing Department Inter Mountain & Spaghetti Fly. Inc., 10 Lane Unit 31, Barangay San Agustin, Mandaluyong City. E-mail: mktg@interasia.com.

E-mail the author at javierjicki@yahoo.com.

LIFESTYLE

Margarita Fores marks her cafe's third anniversary, with more Pinoy comfort food



CARABAO Hills Pares Combo with sinangag, tapioca and pinoy tito gulaman

Three years and still having a ball

ABOVE left: Margarita Fores-Ballesteros' cool comfort food, "Bloom." Singsing of Bukidnon River Prawns (Ginang).

Text by Margie Rugay-Reyes
Photos by Romy Hamilton

AFTER THREE YEARS IN THE highly competitive Greenhills 2, Cafe Bola remains at the top of its game.

Its creative kitchen continues to cook up new, delicious and mouth-watering dishes for diners eager to sample its "cool comfort food."

Adobo flakes with kissing pair on rice, baked Hungry-style cheese with egg on rice, caramelized spam with eggs on rice, and spicy bangus creamer with pan de sal crumbs are top sellers. But owners Margarita Fores and Idolo Lim, her long-time beau, said in the menu about every two months, believing diners should be treated to fresh, innovative, intriguing dishes all the time.

So, when Cafe Bola (Greenhill 2nd, 7272682) celebrated recently its third year, the event was marked with the launching of new comfort food for adventurous Pinoy diners.

"[Though] food in Cafe Bola still always reminds us of the dishes we grew up with," says Fores, who also runs Glee and Pepato and is Mahalo.ning's favorite enemy, "we sometimes put some creative turns to make the food more exciting."

The Pares Bloom is garlic-ey fried rice topped with tempting bangus, slices of salted egg, tomatoes, green onions and chicharon. It's quite similar to bangsigang rice minus the mangoes, sweet and lagoring. "I learned it from The Glenda Cayanan back in the

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A perfect smile with the new and modern dental center

By Hector S. Salazar

ACHIEVING A PERFECT SMILE IS NO longer impossible these days. Even more, going to the dentist is now something to look forward to with the Vera Cruz Advanced Dentistry and Oral Center (VADOC).

Headed by the team Dr. Mark Cruz, who is renowned for his pioneering efforts in improving the dental profession, recently opened VADOC located on the 12th floor of the Medical Plaza Building, Ayala cor. Herrera Streets, Makati.

VADOC redefines the meaning of a dental clinic with state-of-the-art equipment and a cozy relaxing ambience.

The center offers an extremely advanced technology in oral diagnostic and range of procedures, dental implantology and jaw reconstruction. From conventional checkups to the most complicated oral rehabilitation procedures, VADOC is fully equipped to handle any dental emergency at an affordable price.

VADOC has an extensive line of services and normally offered in other dental clinics. The most popular nowadays is the dental implants.

A dental implant is basically placing an artificial tooth-like structure made up of titanium inside the jawbone. There is a certain waiting period for the bone and implant to bear together. This process is called "Osseo-integration."

Dental implant at VADOC is executed by no less because Gan is very particular about sanitation.

"We are very strict when we do the procedure," Gan said. "The equipment must always be sterilized with our high-technology equipment. We don't want any bacteria present that may lead into infection."

This infection can lead to dental implant failure. Moreover, Gan has an impressive track record for the hundreds of implants he has done in the past. Only success rate is 99 percent. "The 1 percent failure is because patients are smokers," he added.

VADOC also provides highly specific and specialized oral surgical procedures and treatment of disorders affecting the mouth, teeth, face and neck with Maxillo Facial Surgery. The center also offers basic dental services like periodontal treatment, bone grafting, and other special surgical procedures.

Gan pioneered the tooth whitening when he set up Perfect Smile. This process has been widely successful in the Philippines.

Gan took up his training in Implant Surgery at the West Coast Surgery Center for Osseointegration in Los Angeles, California. He completed his residency in Prosthodontics hospital and full-mouth Prosthodontic at the University of California in Los Angeles. He had his one year Oral Surgery Externship Program at the University of the Philippines, Philippine General Hospital in Manila, and finished his Doctorate of Dental Medicine at the University of The East Manila.

Mercury Drug-Citibank cardholders get free dental coverage

MERCURY DRUG-CITIBANK cardholders now have more reasons to smile with the addition of free dental coverage to the credit card's already extensive healthcare package.

"True to our promise to offer both a credit card and healthcard with the Mercury Drug Citibank Visa, we continuously look for ways to make our product more relevant to users. The free dental coverage will be a welcome complement to our standard features that include free annual check-up and free eye examination," said Michelle Tirona-Bunoy, Citibank Cards business director.

The free dental package will be provided by OneWorkforce Health Corp and will cover dental consultations, oral prophylaxis, unlimited simple tooth extraction and temporary filling, reconstruction of jacket crowns, inlays and onlays, gum treatments and treatments of oral lesions, wounds and burns.

The free dental services will be available in over 200 affiliated dental clinics nationwide. To avail of the benefit, Mercury Drug-Citibank cardholders will need to call 888-8040 and request for a membership card, which will be honored in participating dental clinics and health establishments including Healthway.

Touted as the financial passport to health and wellness, the Mercury Drug-Citibank Visa offers cardholders a 2-percent rebate on all Mercury Drug purchases, no other charges, a 0.5-percent rebate will be credited. On top of these rebates, cardholders also enjoy a range of health and wellness benefits such as free emergency quick response assistance membership and discounts in hospitals and health services. Aside from Medical City and Cebu Doctors' Hospital, the other hospitals that provide discount to Mercury Drug Citibank cardholders are Macias Community Hospital, Manila General Hospital in Cebu and South Ismael Hospital clinic in Cebu.

Cardholders also have the option to avail of a Hospital Income with Critical Illness Insurance Plan at attractive rates, with premiums reasonably charged to their credit card. The plan features hospital income benefit, daily cash allowance during confinement, and hospital cash benefit for first-time sufferers of the following critical illnesses: cancer, stroke, myocardial infarction, kidney failure, and major organ transplantations.

Plus, as with all the other standard features of a Citibank Credit Card, the Mercury Drug-Citibank card allows longer and lighter payments with the Citibank Flexi-Pay Installment Plan. Cardholders can also pay their utility bills conveniently with Citibank Bill-Pay and experience preferential treatment courtesy of Citibank World Privileges.

For more information on Mercury Drug-Citibank Card, log on to www.citibank.com.ph, or call the 24-hour CitiPhone at 795-9999. Applications forms are also available and are accepted at Mercury Drug branches.

Affordable and effective gum care for all

HOW SURE ARE YOU THAT YOUR GUMS ARE healthy? Unfortunately, most Filipinos aren't in the loop when it comes to proper and effective gum care which often results in a multitude of oral disorders like tooth decay, gingivitis, and halitosis, just to name a few.

To arrest this predicament, Lamoluyan Corp has recently introduced Hapee Gumtect, an innovative and rare solution that helps the cleansing and bacteria eliminating capabilities of existing oral solutions to much greater effect.

Lamoluyan Corp managing consultant Ding Salvador says Hapee Gumtect is the result of Lamoluyan's tireless desire to bring only the best products for Filipinos to enjoy and benefit from. Lamoluyan believes that Hapee Gumtect is the culmination of what's best in oral care: just because a preventive product is expensive doesn't mean it's effective. The company resolutely maintains that quality must not come at a price.

Hapee Gumtect's efficacy lies in its three powerful ingredients: chlorhexidine, Xylitol, and Miradent, all of which prevent and stop dental bacteria. Chlorhexidine has a binding capability that prevents bad bacteria in the mouth and mucous membranes, while helping in the formation of healthy tissues.

Xylitol, a natural sweetener, helps in suppressing bacteria in the gums. Finally, Miradent is a monofluorophosphate antibacterial agent that prevents the swelling caused by gingivitis. It's also effective in loosening the accumulation of trapped food bits that can cause a breeding ground for bacteria and trigger the first of subsequent dental ailments.

Hapee Gumtect is the only product of its kind in the market that was formulated by a Filipino company that genuinely cares for the dental needs of Filipinos. It costs not less than international brands and is the first Filipino gum formula toothpaste to be accepted and professionally recommended by the Philippine Dental Association.

Lamoluyan Corp made a conscious effort to ensure that Hapee Gumtect's cost makes it accessible to everyone. It does not make less than the average dental hygiene and is very easy to administer because brushing one's teeth is already a daily habit to most people.

Gumtect is more than just a medical solution—it's the company's way of providing valuable service to Filipinos, who deserve only the best in oral care.

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For Sensitive Gums

Professionally Recommended by the Philippine Dental Association

BUY 2 PINAR

The unsightly truth about tooth decay

From page B1

pond bug gingivitis increase, or periodontal disease, opens our dividing lines possibly leads to a horrible oral environment, the tooth is susceptible to dental caries.

The anatomy of tooth may affect the likelihood of caries formation. Its crevices, rather the deep grooves of tooth are more prone to and suggestive of pit and fissure shells are more likely to develop. Also, caries are more likely to develop when food is trapped between teeth.

Bacteria

The mouth contains a wide variety of bacteria, but only a few specific species of bacteria are believed to cause dental caries. Streptococcus mutans and Lactobacillus species. They feed on sugars in the diet and produce lactic acid during this process. The acid then causes the tooth to lose minerals (demineralization) and ultimately to develop cavities. Actinomyces species, Streptococcus mutans, and Streptococcus sanguis. Bacteria collect around the tooth's neck and gums in a sticky, invisible colored plaque called plaque. Some may collect plaque more extensively than others. The presence of the biting surfaces of molar and premolar teeth provides ideal environments for bacteria, as can untreated appliances such as orthodontic braces or removable partial dentures.

Susceptible carbohydrates

Bacteria in a person's mouth convert sugars (most commonly sucrose or common sugar, glucose, and fructose) into acids such as lactic acid. Saliva normally neutralizes acids produced in the mouth, thus preventing caries. Streptococcus mutans, which is the dominant oral bacteria that causes dental caries, is able to thrive in acidic environments. Lactobacilli are also acid-tolerant bacteria frequently identified in carious lesions, actinomyces species, Streptococcus sanguis, and Streptococcus mutans. Bacteria collect around the tooth's neck and gums in a sticky, invisible colored plaque called plaque. Some may collect plaque more extensively than others. The presence of the biting surfaces of molar and premolar teeth provides ideal environments for bacteria, as can untreated appliances such as orthodontic braces or removable partial dentures.

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Time

The frequency of ingestion with sugar-containing foods and drinks affects the likelihood of caries development. After meals or drinks containing sugars, the bacteria in the mouth metabolize them, resulting in acids in the plaque which dissolve pits in tooth enamel. The pH remains low for about 20 minutes after the sugar is eaten. It is the total length of time the mouth's pH is low, rather than the frequency of sugar intake, that is important. Eating more frequently increases the acidic environment, problems of the surrounding tissues, and the number of teeth affected. Snacks and sugary drinks between meals have a large effect. Frequently sipping these periods of acidic environments, the development of dental caries when greatly increased frequency of sugar consumption. The regular, whole sugars are often considered to be healthy, but the body is very metabolically active, for a longer period of time, and causes one to be likely to develop decay if teeth are exposed less frequently to these substances and proper oral hygiene is maintained. This is because the pH more rapidly returns to normal after eating. Also, the tooth surface is exposed to these acids for a shorter time.

The carious process can begin within days of a tooth erupting into the mouth. Caries usually begins in the pits and fissures on the biting surface of the tooth or in other areas of the tooth surface. The speed of the process is dependent on the susceptibility of the individual factors described above but is believed to be slower than the interaction of bacteria. (From wikipedia.com)

The unsightly truth about tooth decay

DENTAL CARIES, ALSO KNOWN AS tooth decay or dental cavities, are holes that develop in the hard surfaces of teeth. The occurrence of dental caries is globally widespread, and the disease can lead to pain, tooth loss, infection, and even, in severe cases, death. An estimated 90 percent of schoolchildren worldwide and most adults have experienced dental caries, with the disease being more severe in some developing countries and most in African countries. In the United States, dental caries is the most common chronic childhood disease, at least five times more common than asthma. It is the most important cause of tooth loss in children.

The number of cases has decreased in some developed countries, and the disease is usually attributed to its potentially preventable nature, with fluoride toothpaste commonly used to promote remineralization. Nonetheless, places which have seen an increase in the consumption of sugar-containing foods and beverages overall have continued to have substantial to the distribution of the disease. In children aged 5 to 17, 90 percent of dental caries exists in 25 percent of the population.

Types of dental caries

Caries are classified, based on location, as coronal, those on teeth above the gum line, usually detected by the dentist's explorer; root caries, those found on any part of a tooth covered by gum tissue; and those found in pits and fissures. They have different causes, treatments, and prognoses. Coronal caries differs from pit and fissure caries.

Signs and symptoms

In its early progression, a person may not be aware of it. The earliest sign of a carious lesion is the appearance of a chalky white spot on the surface of the tooth, indicating an area of demineralization of enamel. As the lesion continues to demineralize, it can have brown but well-opposite pits or fissures, a "cavity". The process before this point is reversible, but once a cavity forms, the lost tooth structure cannot be regenerated. Anterior (front) smooth surface caries and cavity-support dentin caries was most present but the remineralization process has stopped, leaving a stain. A brown spot which is still in appearance is probably a sign of arrested caries.

In the enamel and dentin are destroyed further, the cavitation becomes more noticeable. The affected areas of the tooth change color and become soft to the touch. Over the decay process through enamel, the destroyed cavities, which have passages to the nerve of the tooth, become exposed and cause the tooth to hurt. The pain can be worsened by heat, cold, or excess foods and drinks. Treated caries can also cause bad breath and foul tastes. In highly progressed cases, infection can spread from the tooth to the surrounding soft tissues which can become life-threatening.

Causes

There are four phases in the formation of caries: a tooth surface (enamel or dentin); cariogenic (or cariogenic) cariocreating) bacteria, fermentable carbohydrates (such as sucrose), and time. The caries process does not form an irreversible cavity, and different individuals will be susceptible to different degrees depending on the shape of their teeth, oral hygiene habits, and the buffering capacity of their saliva.

Dental caries can occur on any surface of a tooth that is exposed to the oral cavity, but not the enamel which can withstand within the acid.

Teeth

Having "soft teeth" is usually not the cause of caries, despite commonly held belief to the contrary. There are certain diseases and disorders, however, that affect teeth, that can have an individual or general risk for caries. Amelogenesis imperfecta, which occurs between 1 in 718 and 1 in 14,000 individuals, is a disorder in which the enamel does not form fully or is insufficient amount and can fall off a tooth. Dentinogenesis imperfecta is a similar disease. In both cases, teeth may be left more vulnerable to decay because the enamel is not as able to protect the tooth as it would in health.

In most genetic disorders or diseases affecting teeth that are the primary cause of dental caries. Ninety-six percent of Sjögren's syndrome, especially Sjögren's syndrome, will become soluble when exposed to saliva's environments. Enamel begins to demineralize at a pH of 5.5. Lipstick and cosmetics are more susceptible to caries than enamel because their low lower topical content. Thus, other oral surfaces of teeth are as-

CONTINUED P3

Calcium, the essential mineral for strong teeth

CALCIUM IS THE MOST PLENTIFUL MINERAL found in the human body, accounting for 1.5 to 2 percent of an adult's total body weight. The main skeletal or tissue storage site of the body's calcium (about 99 percent), calcium in these tissues is maintained in the form of calcium phosphate salts. Bone cells, body tissues, blood, and other body fluids constitute remaining calcium.

Calcium is essential for the formation of and maintenance of healthy teeth and bones.

The bones incorporate calcium into their tissue; like other tissues in the body, bones continuously being reabsorbed and re-formed. Therefore, increasing calcium in their structure is a matter of dietary concern.

Many foods contain calcium, but dairy products are the most significant source. Milk and dairy products such as yogurt, cheese, and buttermilk contain an efficiently absorbed form of calcium.

For children aged 1 to 3 years, whole milk (3 percent fat) is recommended. The best source of dairy products in a concern for adults and children over one year of age. If a person is unable to do so consume whole or skimming the calcium content by ordering low-fat (2 percent or 1 percent) or skim milk and other dairy products.

The calcium is not contained in the "fat portion" of milk, so removing the fat will not affect the calcium content. In fact, when you replace the fat portion that has been removed with an equal part of skimmed milk, you are actually increasing the calcium content. Therefore, one cup of skim or non-fat milk with three servings per day that is one cup of whole milk because almost the same cup of skim milk is the milk up of the calcium-containing product.

Other dairy products such as yogurt, most cheeses, and buttermilk are excellent sources of calcium and are available in low-fat or fat-free versions.

Milk is also a good source of phosphorus and magnesium, which help the body absorb and use the calcium more effectively. Vitamin D is essential to efficient utilization of calcium. Milk is fortified with vitamin D for this reason.

Green leafy vegetables such as broccoli, collards, kale, mustard greens, turnip greens, and bok choy or Chinese cabbage are good sources of calcium.

Some sources of calcium for tofu and certain canned with their soft bones. Shellfish, almonds, Brazil nuts, and dried beans are also sources of calcium. It is difficult, however, to use adequate quantities of these foods to obtain optimal calcium intake.

Several food products, such as breads and orange juice, are enriched with calcium or make them a significant source of calcium for people whose dairy product consumption is inadequate.

Low intakes of calcium for prolonged periods of time can lead to calcium deficiency. This is common in adolescents, but can also occur in people with secondary to dietary problems (i.e., hypertension, and other disorders. From *MedicinePlus* (www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/calcium).

The National Academy of Sciences' Institute of Medicine has issued new daily calcium and vitamin D intake guidelines for various groups of persons adequate. Intake (AI)*

CALCIUM	
Males and females 0 - 18 years	1,300 mg
Women and men 19 - 50 years	1,000 mg
Pregnant or nursing women up to age 1	1,300 mg
Pregnant or nursing women 19 - 50 years	1,000 mg
Men and women over 50	1,200 mg
Vitamin D	
People 0 - 50 years with limited sun exposure	1,300 mg
People 51 - 70 years with limited sun exposure	1,000 mg
People over 70 with limited sun exposure	1,300 mg

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COMFORT Fruit Shakes: watermelon, jackfruit, chico, kamias and pomelo

LECHON Sinigang with Ayer Watermelon

KAMIAS and Tamarind Sinigang of Back Loksoc served with white rice

BBQ BABY Back Ribs with Tanduay glaze, ketchup salsa and rice

BLACK AND WHITE: contrasting styles of Alvin Lee's room, former UPN star Ervinn Angeles, highlight Café Bola's bridging colored interiors.

Three years and still having a ball

From page E1

"Ah," says Perez.

Sinigang, a quintessential Pinoy dish, has been reinvented into Sinigang na Lechon with chunks of roasted pig meat and vegetables with large pieces of ripe watermelon. "My aunt from Iloilo Province would put Ilaw na paminta in her sinigang and cook it until it becomes cloudy. I made mine with Ilaw na paminta to remove the [smell] from the lechon," Perez says.

Rainy day treats

Perez has whipped up her soups for the wet season, in servings big enough to be shared. "We notice that our readers always crave for soups [that can be] shared. So we've come up with a variety of soups in big servings," she says.

Choices are Kamias and Tamarind Sinigang of Back Loksoc, Papaya Tinola of Rock Lobster and Bulacan Okra Pepper. (Ulang) Kamias Sinigang.

If you want something dry or just with a lot of sauce, BBQ Baby Back Ribs with Tanduay glaze, Kinchay salsa and rice is filling. Also satisfying is Crispy Dinuguan King Lapu-Lapu with Orange Escabeche.

Since many people now eat healthy and Perez is into South Beach Diet meals, Café Bola has healthified dishes, from red rice to South Beach Adobo Chicken (only in soy and vinegar and no oil) and Grilled Bangus with Kangkong Salad.

The Café Bola menu has touches of Italian since Perez and Lim decided at the start to make the restaurant like a Filipino version of Cibo. "Filipinos cannot eat Italian all the time. We always go back and look for Pinoy food," Perez says.

Italian-inspired fare include Kesong Puti in Canvasan, fried sandwich cheese with tomato sauce and basil; Fried Mozzarella Bolas Anibal, Tagaytay greens with mango and lemon vinaigrette; and Bola Caprese: baby mozzarella meatballs with tomato and basil.

Sunday's Tawa Lang with Coconut Cream is also fast becoming a favorite. It is served either with tawa pasta, though the latter seems preferred. "It's the original recipe of the mom of my chef, Bunky, so I named it after him," says Perez.

"I remember when I started working in the '80s, I read in a magazine about this Italian chef who'd make pasta with coconut milk. That stuck in my mind. When I started to do a lot of work in Mahatahang, preparing mostly Filipino dishes, I tried it," she says.

When That Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra visited Mahatahang, Perez served Bunky's spicy hot and creamy Ling. "Thaksin liked it so much that, after a week, we put it on the Bola menu."

Perez says they do a home-style version in Bola of many ideas they put in menus for Mahatahang. "Like the ceramic chops, which our caretakers use did for Mahatahang, it clicked so much that I added it to the Bola menu."

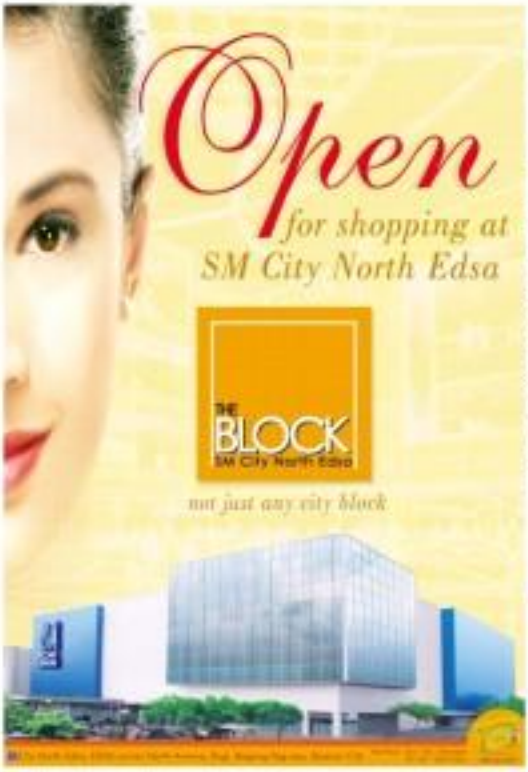
Sweet endings

Desserts at Café Bola should not be missed. Aside from homemade quality desserts, such as ube-mamo pie (from unang ni ambo), chain' tiramisu, Bola Bar and a variation of the traditional cheesecake using kesong puti, there are Carabao Milk Panna Cotta with mango, tapioca and pancho glass, and Hot-Choko Emmolder.

Perez says Lim, who's mostly in charge of Bola's desserts, is now working on a new dessert called sticky buns. "When he comes back from the US, he will introduce sticky buns, a cross between brioche and cinnamonade. It's really good, crazy but still livable."

And if there's such a thing as a comfort drink, those Bola concoctions will no doubt qualify—kamias, watermelon, chico, pomelo and jackfruit. The banana shake is cool, pale green, sweet and tart. Perez says the server therein recommend and designed it. Kamias is in season now remind, and she gets her supply from trees in friends' and relatives' backyards.

Next has plans of opening a few more Café Bola branches in the metropolis and, eventually, franchising out.



SWEET: moms have learned that by giving kids their favorite treats, they can get them to help with chores.

Getting kids to do their chores

MOMS ARE BEGGING TO LEARN THEY can get their children to do things by giving them Lucky Me! Pancit Canton.

Smart moms have gotten their kids to study and clean up after themselves, among others, by serving their favorite merienda.

Lucky Me! Pancit Canton is fortified with vitamins and minerals like vitamin A that helps maintain normal vision and iron that helps build and maintain blood supply. It is also rich in carbohydrates for energy.

Lucky Me! Instant noodle snacks are not only delicious and nutritious but also easy on the pocket.

ENTERTAINMENT

Alice Bonoan-Q. Velarde

Who's afraid of Andrew Wolff?

CESAR MONTANO ARE Andrew Wolff ahead guru Manny Pangilinan a run for his money when they come close to having a flashfight at the venue of the Celebrity Boxing Match on Sunday? I know Bobby Khonghun's team will back Pip to the hilt, but I'm not sure if the age of chivalry is dead yet. Bobby's son-in-law would stand a better chance against Andrew if he should have been disqualified because he violated the rules twice. It's okay with us that Bonnard (Montano's son) but Andrew should've fought fairly. Ang yabang pa niya magbanatan. Kitang-kita naman sa footage na he was the one who started the commotion. Then tinging nemalibot siya sa ringside bato ng bato (dahan-dahan ha si Bobby). And the answer was inaggressive pa rin!

Oh, well ... and that while Andrew shouted when he had a fight with his ex-girlfriend Ceresa Gaisano?

At the risk of... "Any side bet? says and he'll make it appear that it's any magic of mga report pa siya sa pulis?

Andrew has this penchant for playing the underdog when he's really the big, bad Wolff.

Lovesick!

It's going to be a sweet, sweet September as ABS-CBN comes two popular love teams: Kim Chiu-Gerald Anderson and Shaina Magdayao-Rayver Cruz in "Lovesick" primetime's "Charot & Gymal" (all Sundays of September after "Your Song"). Set against the backdrop of a high school musical, Kim and Shaina play best friends Crystal and Charie, Gerald is Hershey the lead guy in the group and Rayver portrays Johnny the Dude.

Being around them for many months now, you feel giddy. Both tandems are in their "almost but not quite love yet" stage.

Kim blushes. "Sa nagsasama-sama ako it's normal," she says "slowly but surely we're getting there." But when they were still inside the "TRB" house, Kim's crush was Mikee and Gerald's Sachtna eyes set on Shai.

Shaina sighs, "Uh not yet di-kami-in-umpa-salitan-at-home" Rayver shoot back, "I can wait."

FYI (For Your Infalguence)

• Still on Kim, she told me that there's no gap between her and Sunshine Dizon. There seem to more that the former star felt insecure when Kim, suddenly came into the picture was that they have the same Asian features. "We were treated beside each other on our flight to Davao for 'SAAP' recently. We got to know things up." So now, "Miss Chiu" and "Miss Kimmy" are both "Miss Asian" to each other. So now there's "Miss Andy-lla."

• Trivia time... Did you know that Jessa I "I will always look up to Papa Jesus. I promise myself to never let hang get into my head. I don't want to pretend to be anything I'm not." Hopefully, he won't cut his words as he gets a taste of more success.

• Sam Concepcion told me that the most memorable event for her in "You Are the Star" is the cast rehearsing and Sam's Abby caught a pig in the mud and they got drenched in the rain. Getting dirty and getting wet together ... Ooop la la! What would he more fun than that?

• Dominic Ochoa is on to love with Cremence Go, his stylist-girlfriend of two years. But he denies rumors that they are already living in. "I visit her every day or maybe when they see me in the condo where she stays. they jump to conclusions. I will go home to my parents' house." Kuya is already fashioned somewhat as a shield to interrogation. I is and Dominic plan house.

'Your Song' Vol. 3

"Your Song" keeps on playing love teams as it resolves its third volume this September. Seven Sunday after "SAAP '06"). Jaenel Mendoza and Brenda Fox of "Till You Believe" will give life to Mico Aliter's "Bigyo na Bigay" (Sept. 3), while Max Andrade and Jason Abalos will star on Sept. 10 in Tyan Bakti's "Tanong ng Lahat." Angelika de la Cruz and Jeremiah Gebaw are featured on Sept. 17 in "Hinlo Hin" by Jerrico Ibaño. On Sept. 24, John Lloyd Cruz and Bea Alonzo will give color to Shamcath's "OK lang."

Singing champs

The Cascabe Divas (Mylene, Celina, Irene and Almira) and The Hilltop Hunks (Bernardo and Jem Manguera), who set off sparks of DE Hilltop Boundless Entertainment, garnered top honors at the recently-concluded World Championship of the Performing Arts in Hollywood.

The Cascabe gay pride members in the Broadway Gospel, original blacks and Top Hats categories in the Vocal Group Section (Senior Division). They so impressed the judges, who awarded them the title of Worldwide Champions in the Pop Category (Senior Division). The Hilltops garnered three silver in the Senior Division. Emilio has great plans for his world-class stands. They could be the next big thing!

Bernard Bert Bonnaza is an incipient "pamilihan angel" Lets bidder for an overdose of smiles and laughter just when I needed it most.

For feedback, e-mail aentertainment@inquirer.com.ph

KIM Chiu

Reality check: 'Starstruck' expands search

By Nini Valera

"STARSTRUCK," THE GMA-7 TALENT SEARCH that started the current television revival of reality-based shows has extended the age range of its contestants from 15-17 to 16-21.

"We already have a lot of voice in our talent pool and we now want to tap into an older age group to look for individuals with star potential," said Wilma Galvante, GMA-7 senior vice president for entertainment TV, in a phone interview with Inquirer Entertainment on Monday.

"Starstruck," which is also the first homegrown reality-search show in the land, has brought the contestants to a higher level by including talent agents and managers in the process of discovering fresh faces for television.

"The only limitation imposed on the contestants is that they have to be new faces on television," Galvante qualified. "Edad naman can bring many models, for example. This would make the talent agents part of the search."

The show's nationwide auditions, which begin on Saturday, are expected to run for eight weeks.

Instead of just a pair of male and female winners, this season's "Starstruck" is looking for four male talents.

"We'll still have the ultimate survivor couple where the top winner among the males would be paired with the top female among the female contestants," Galvante said.

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1 CLICK – THX	6 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN 2
2 YOU ARE THE ONE	7 THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT 2
3 SNAKES ON THE PLANE	8 STAY ALIVE
4 LITTLE MAN	9 MY SUPER EX-GIRLFRIEND
5 THE DEVIL WEARS PRADA	10 THE BIG WHITE

ERMITA

1 YOU ARE THE ONE	
2 MY SUPER EX-GIRLFRIEND	5 THE DEVIL WEARS PRADA
3 STAY ALIVE	6 SNAKES ON A PLANE
4 CLICK	7 LITTLE MAN

METRO EAST

1 YOU ARE THE ONE	5 THE DEVIL WEARS PRADA
2 CLICK	6 LITTLE MAN
3 MY SUPER EX-GIRLFRIEND	7 SNAKES ON A PLANE
4 TAMAYA	8 SUKOB

NOVALICHES

1 YOU ARE THE ONE	3 SNAKES ON A PLANE
2 THE DEVIL WEARS PRADA	4 LITTLE MAN

CITISQUARE MALABON — PIONEER

1 YOU ARE THE ONE	1 YOU ARE THE ONE
2 MY SUPER EX-GIRLFRIEND	2 THE DEVIL WEARS PRADA
3 RESERVE	3 SNAKES ON A PLANE
4 RESERVE	4 STAY ALIVE

STA. ROSA — LIPA

1 YOU ARE THE ONE	1 YOU ARE THE ONE
2 THE BREAK-UP	2 STORMBREAKER
3 MORTUARY	3 THE BREAK-UP
4 MY SUPER EX-GIRLFRIEND	4 JUST MY LUCK

DASMARINAS — ANGELES

1 YOU ARE THE ONE	1 YOU ARE THE ONE
2 MORTUARY	2 STORMBREAKER
3 LITTLE MAN	3 AMERICAN DREAMZ
4 THE BUTTERFLY EFFECT 2	4 TAMAYA

IMUS — STARMILLS

1 YOU ARE THE ONE	1 YOU ARE THE ONE
2 THE DEVIL WEARS PRADA	2 FIERCE PEOPLE
3 MORTUARY	3 MIAMI VICE
4 LITTLE MAN	4 MORTUARY
	5 LITTLE MAN
	6 MY SUPER EX-GIRLFRIEND

BACOLOD — ILOILO

1 YOU ARE THE ONE	1 YOU ARE THE ONE
2 MIAMI VICE	2 MIAMI VICE
3 MY SUPER EX-GIRLFRIEND	3 MY SUPER EX-GIRLFRIEND
4 FIERCE PEOPLE	4 LITTLE MAN
5 LITTLE MAN	
6 CLICK	

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Alte Awards finalists

THE FIFTH ANNUAL Alte Awards will give out 20 awards in recognition of outstanding live performers on stage and in the concert arena tonight at the Manila Hotel's Peninsula Ballroom.

Three-time Entertainer of the Year Gary Valenciano will be elevated to the Hall of Fame, this recognition will also be conferred on singer-actresses Sharon Cuneta, Regine Velasquez and Dawn Zulueta. KPKV also the event.

The awards night, directed by Al Quinn, will be hosted by Vina Morales, Heart Evangelista and Derek Ramsay. KPKV also the event.

Radcliffe in TV movie

LONDON—Harry Potter star Daniel Radcliffe will play the son of Rudyard Kipling in a television movie about the author, ITV said Monday.

John Kipling died in World War I, and Nick Elliott, head of drama at the network, said the two war would be part of the subject of "My Boy Jack," which will begin filming next year.

"For many people my age, the film 'Shall We Join a Rope' is a history book," said Radcliffe, 17, who played boy wizard Harry Potter in the eponymous film series based on J.K. Rowling's books. "But I've always been fascinated by the subject and think it's as relevant today as it ever was, with young men still sacrificing their lives in the name of war." AP

'Invincible' No. 1 flick

LOS ANGELES—Football season started early at Mark Wahlberg's "Invincible," a Walt Disney tale about a real-life walk-on who signed with the Philadelphia Eagles in the 1970s, debuted at the top weekend and movie with $17 million.

The previous No. 1 flick, Steve Zissou's "Snakes on a Plane," lost ranks in its second weekend, falling to sixth place with $6.4 million, a steep 58 percent drop, according to studio estimates Sunday.

"Invincible" stars Wahlberg as Vince Papale, a substitute teacher who made the Eagles' special-teams squad in open tryouts.

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at US and Canadian theaters, according to Exhibitor Relations Co., edited tradition.

1) "Invincible," $17M. 2) "Talladega Nights: The Ballad of Ricky Bobby," $10M. 3) "Little Miss Sunshine," $7.5 million. 4) Oh! "Snakes," and "Scorpion," $6.5M. 6) "Snakes on a Plane," $6.4M. 7) "World Trade Center," $6.39M. 8) "Step Up," $6.2M. 9) "Silverado," $5.9M. 10) "Barnyard: The Original Party Animals," $5.4M. David Germain, AP

Samuel Jackson goes on a cinematic 'camping trip'

PEOPLE WE HEARD THAT SAMUEL L. JACKSON was starring in a gung-ho chiller flick titled "Snakes on a Plane," we thought to ourselves, "What a waste of talent."

After viewing the movie, however, our cynicism is no longer quite so smug. Every good actor gets entitled to go on a chin-hang, one-person chiller

cringing every few years or so, as long as they have a chin-hang time doing it. And Jackson appears to be having exactly that in "Snakes on a Plane."

The movie's ride is another Everytheme of early controversy that deserves a few paragraphs of its own. But free of the more heated critics ever written, it says everything about the movie that needs to be said, and leaves absolutely nothing to the imagination.

For a few minutes, we tried to think up "forever" titles for Jackson's latest starrer, just to make a point that perhaps couldn't be made.

What about "Like," we thought first. "Better at 30,000 feet?" Hmmm. "Blisters Deliver and Snitches?" Oh, nope "Snakes on a Plane" doesn't sound all that rare as a movie title at all.

So for this brief, it's a fun if fleetly over-the-top creeper chiller caper about what happens when a reformer-to-a-citizen flown by the FBI on a plane that the murderer fills with deadly snakes to dismantle the witness from worshiping against him?

That plot premise alone is worth its weight in—popcorn. It's unlikely, but-see, silly as all get-out, a cheeky invitation to ramp it up, shrinking all the way to a movie but fun combinations of terror and laughter.

The people behind the camera—aside from, advice in thinking up really campy and outrageous plot developments that enable them to keep the tickets coming, as the bodies pile up around the constantly decreasing number of survivors.

On the other hand, in their everdancing credit, Jackson and the movie's other actors mediately embrace its campy it up. Instead, they opt to play the film's outlandish scenes with utter seriousness and realism.

It is this wise decision that keeps the production from disintegrating into a glob of boring bizarre-comedy shtick and facile double-takes.

Thus, the film's combination of campy storytelling and realistic acting makes it more than just a predictably campy horror romp. And Samuel L. Jackson survives his "Snakes on a Plane" camping trip with his dweeps reputation intact.

VIEWFINDER

Alastair C. Xerxes

SAMUEL L. Jackson

'Bin Laden's Spy in America'

At 9 p.m. on Sept. 10, National Geographic Channel premieres the two-hour special, "Bin Laden's Spy in America," the somewhat-fabulous story of Ali Mohamed, a master spy and senior operative for al-Qaeda working within the United States, but with terrorist connection that resulted all over the globe.

Karel Marquez

Teen-icon Karel Marquez is this week's guest host on Nickelodeon ZIV "Breakfast," joining his hosts regulars JC Castillo, Patty Laurel and Ryan Arnaiz.

Karel is one of Showbusiness most accomplished young stars. At only 19, she's already a popular actress, singer, VJ and commercial model.

Friday Marquez's talented daughter made her acting debut on "Bora," followed by appearances on "Sesame Street" and "Pinoy Idol Ultimate" as one of the show's first Judges. She is currently seen weekly on "Asap."

'Zoom'

The new adventure comedy "Zoom" explores the untapped hero in all of us. It tells the story of four kids who, because of their connectionary powers, just can't seem to fit in.

With the help of Jack (Tim Allen), aka Captain Zoom, an out-of-shape superhero who has lost his powers, these misfits learn to make use of their special skills and become superheroes here on saving the world from certain destruction—as soon as they make it home in time for dinner!

Manilow's Emmy

LOS ANGELES—SINGER Barry Manilow scrubbed more than a good doctor to the upcoming movie where he had his surgery Monday. He scanned his Emmy award to here, too.

Hours after Manilow won the Emmy for outstanding individual performance in a variety or music program, he underwent hip surgery at an undisclosed Southern California hospital.

Manilow came through the operation "swimmingly." Doctors installed a new hip joint in Palm Springs, California, publicist Carol Marshall said. — AP

Fashion rockfest at the Big Dome

PCINCHOUSE CELEBRATES ITS 20TH anniversary with a fusion of music and fashion that brings together 20 of the best rock bands in the country donning creations of the Young Designers Guild of the Philippines.

Dubbed "Pinchogen Dreamlab Rockfest," the fashion-music event at the Araneta Coliseum tonight, 8:45 p.m.

Among the featured bands are Barrios, Imsiya in Edge, Hale and Sugarfree.

Classical night

Sining Series 2006-2007, in cooperation with Music Theater Association-Philippines, presents "On Wings of Song" featuring Manila Sinfonietta with guest artists Ana Feliciano and Lena Mellissenne on Sept. 9, 8 p.m. at the Ateneo Arts Studio.

Classically trained singer Marvin Letumia won first place in the National Music Competition for Young Artists (NAMCYA) voice finals level, male voice category.

While still studying at the University of the Philippines College of Music as a Iskolar ng Bayan, Letumia's talent was already accepted at the Pacific Music Festival in the Baroque Vocal Program in Sapporo, Japan, as an academy member coached by international vocal music style and vocal teachers Hiroko Philippen-Sapporo, assistants to the 9th Boris Pergolesi competition for Vocal here in New York City and a consultant for Vocal here in New York City and a consultant for the Asahikawa Musical International Competition in Tokyo in Canada.

Marvin's repertoire for the role of Quasimodo in the "Hunchback of Notre Dame" and his roles in "Madea," "Life is Strich" and "Tarzan" in the newly-opened Disneyland Hong Kong.

For ticket reservations, call 551-3481 or 09.0894.4212.

Aug. 31

Fireworks and DJ at Tavern on the Square, Greenhills 3

Moonlight at Shoe Fly Brasserie, Mandaluyong, Ortigas

Singer-Jam 2 featuring Mel Feliciano, Bobbi Gold Concert, Cubicles, Windmill and Hank Band at Singers Bar

Sept. 1

The Jerks at The Bistro, Ayala, QC

Beside 70 at Mark's, Greenhills 3

Sept. 2

Coffeebreak Island at The Bistro, Ayala, QC

Fleetstreet and the Gang at Mark's, Greenhills 3

Sept. 4

MIA and Head at Mark's, Greenhills 3

Tropical Depression at Tavern on the Square, Greenhills 3

Sept. 5

Doug Alap at The Bistro, Ayala, QC

Acoustic Jive at Mark's, Greenhills 3

Bones Shockeye at Tavern on the Square, Greenhills 3

Sept. 6

DJ at Ebonwave Salon; 9 p.m. Call 895-3300.

"Rock the Boardshorts" The Oakley DIY Bus Tour with MOP and Neutpoz. The Bistro, Ayala, QC

Richard Hirit, Eddie Battinlig and Jedrick Ramalao Mark's, Greenhills 3

Skin it at Tavern on the Square, Greenhills 3

Sept. 7

Pawnamera Survival at The Bistro, Ayala, QC

Stella Rule and Rifle at Mark's, Greenhills 3

Orange and Lemons at Tavern on the Square, Greenhills 3

Sept. 8

DJ 's Rhonda with Moonstruck at SUN Bar Call 899-1455

The Jerks at The Bistro, Ayala, QC

Route 70 at Mark's, Greenhills 3

Fat Session at Tavern on the Square, Greenhills 3

Sept. 9

Spur at The Bistro, Ayala, QC

Fleetstreet and The Gang at Mark's, Greenhills 3

Kearney H. at Tavern on the Square, Greenhills 3

Sept. 11

Pantaleon Bridge at The Bistro, Ayala, QC

Silk and Steel at Mark's, Greenhills 3

Tropical Depression at Tavern on the Square, Greenhills 3

Sept. 12

Neal Cabangon at The Bistro, Ayala, QC

Acoustic Jive at Mark's, Greenhills 3

Reality check: 'Starstruck' . . .

From page F1

romantic," said Gutierrez. "But we would also be looking for an intimate bond or a mutual idol and an ultimate sweetheart, who will be developed as individual talents and not part of a love team."

In order to a million pesos in cash prize and a management contract with GMA 7 for each of the top winners. Television audiences get to pick the winners by sending in their votes through text messages.

Anindya Mercado and Mark Herras were two of the unlikely teenagers who were managed by Gutierrez. Mercado managed Jon Santos, managed as the first "Starstruck" members. The second batch was produced Rico Gomez and Mike Tan. Last year, the show discovered Marky Cielo from the Visayans Province and Jackie Rice from Olongapo.

But not all members are automatically trained for stardom.

As proven, Anindya and Mark are the only bright stars among the "Starstruck" talent pool, which also includes the second placers and other finalists. Mika Dela Cruz remains a successful recording artist, while Jon Matic, who placed only second last year, has emerged to be more popular than Jackie.

"Sometimes, it's a matter of attitude," Gutierrez noted. "They still have to work hard for their careers. But definitely, those who survived the contest were all very talented."